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ABSTRACT

The articles collected in this issue of "The English Record" examine various aspects of the use of interdisciplinary approaches in English instruction. Titles are "Zen, the Arts, and Motorcycle Maintenance" by Janet Gane and Tom Reigstad, which describes the formation of a course in creative inquiry; "Career Education and the English Curriculum" by Peter Finn; "Journey into the Kingdom of Night" by Herbert Safran, which outlines an elective course in the literature of World War II; "Psycholinguistics and the Teaching of Poetry" by Stanley Bank; "Millstones: An Approach to the 'Miller's Tale' and the 'Reeve's Tale'" by Ronald Herzman; "The Western in Literature and Film" by Charles R. Duke; and "Transcending Fashion: What Is Basic in the Humanities" by Carl Ladensack. The newsletter of the New York State English Council and four poems are included. (KS)

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NEW YORK STATE ENGLISH COUNCIL

the English Record

VOLUME XVIII SPRING 1977 NUMBER 2

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MANUSCRIPTS on all aspects of English are invited. Manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, and should include documentation within the text whenever possible. Manuscripts will be returned only if accompanied by an addressed envelope with sufficient postage enclosed.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS are also published in *The Record*, and submissions are invited. Photographs should be glossy black-and-white, and, where appropriate, should be accompanied by standard model release forms.

NEWSLETTER items should be of general interest to the membership and should reach the Editorial Offices at least one month before publication. Deadline for items for the Autumn issue will be August 1.

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BACK COPIES of available issues of *The English Record* cost $2 each and may be ordered from the Executive Secretary. Correspondence relating to subscriptions and advertising should also be addressed to the Executive Secretary.

TRY IT ON MONDAY presents ideas for use in the English classroom at any level. Contributions are invited and should be sent to Mrs. Marjorie Rogers, Morris Central School, Morris, N.Y. 13808. Items to be returned should be accompanied by a stamped envelope.

From the Editors

"The real train of knowledge isn't a static entity that can be stopped and subdivided," writes Robert Pirsig. "It's always going somewhere. On a track called Quality."

When we called for manuscripts for an "Emphasis: Interdisciplinary" issue, we somehow expected to find among the submissions a philosopher's stone, one that we could remove for all time from those good fences which often make bad neighbors of English and other subjects.

We must report to you that we have failed to unify all human knowledge under the banner of English.

Our train of knowledge turns out to be a local, and most of its stops are rather close to home. Most of our authors have chosen to illustrate methods of enriching English programs through recourse to methods and materials readily available to the English teacher. In these days of nostalgia for The Basics they may have performed a more valuable service for our readers. In any event, we think they have stayed on the track called Quality.

....

The present issue will be the last for this school year. We will be back in September and again in November. In the latter issue we plan to emphasize English teaching in New York State, hoping to present for visitors to the NCTE national convention a strong case for our leadership in the profession.

We are interested in seeing manuscripts, drawings, photographs (black and white), and other materials. Papers dealing with works set in the city and the state and with authors based in New York will be particularly welcome.

To date the response has not been deafening. Surely something has happened in English in New York in the last 200 years.

....

We hope you are enjoying the *Record* in its new format, and we wish you a pleasant summer.

THE COVER on this issue is the work of Deborah Hoss, a first-year student at State University College, Geneseo. Deborah, who "likes to shoot textures and old houses," has shown her photographs at Riverhead and Coram on Long Island. The appearance in *The English Record* of the work of Deborah and other student photographers has been made possible by a grant from the Geneseo Foundation.

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ZEN, THE ARTS, AND MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE

Janet Gane
Tom Reigstad

Last year when a new Graphics Communication program was being proposed at Villa Maria College, the Art Department wanted to include a specific course in creative problem-solving. Some of the suggestions for the course tossed around at subsequent Humanities Committee meetings were: "It ought to be something to get students thinking creatively," "It should teach them how to write ad copy and to appreciate literature," "I'd like them to learn how to write jingles," "It should be different and exciting—something they don't normally get in a basic Art or English course," and "Why don't you throw some music in, too?"

Soon, the nebulous course was given a name (Creative Inquiry), was designated as an Interdisciplinary Course (IS 102) required of all first semester freshmen in Graphics Communication, and was handed to us (an Art instructor, and an English instructor) to design fully and eventually to team teach. All we had was the newly written course description for the college catalogue, which read: "Problem solving approach through visual media, literature, and aural forms for developing communicative skills." We want to describe our experience in planning for the course and in teaching it. Our discussions of the philosophy behind Creative Inquiry, the classroom activities that we devised, samples of student work, our criteria for evaluating some of the multimedia activities, and our own conclusions about the course are intended to offer useful ideas and materials for teachers interested in how art and English can be combined into one course.

Janet Gane and Tom Reigstad teach, in the Art and English departments respectively, at Villa Maria College in Buffalo.

Philosophical Background for Creative Inquiry

As we began to set up this new course, we had to identify some general objectives that would reflect what we wanted to accomplish. Out of the many sources that we read, a few seemed particularly useful for us in focusing on some philosophical guidelines for Creative Inquiry. In *How Porcupines Make Love: Notes on a Response-Centered Curriculum* (Xerox, 1972), Alan C. Purves discusses how to encourage meaningful student responses to works of art. We, too, were interested in helping students become the kind of people that Purves talks about:

> **. . . people who can respond to a variety of arts, freely, who can support a varied cultural life, who will be an active audience for the creative artists of the future, and who will be able to use their imaginations in dealing with the experiences that surround them and with finding solutions for the problems they will face. (p.188)**

We wanted to reflect the findings of recent research in responding to literature, and expose students to a wide variety of art, literature, and music—good or bad—so that they could develop their own notions of quality. Arthur N. Applebee, in *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English: A History* (NCTE, 1975), helped to show us that presenting traditionally excellent works of art exclusively and frowning on the "second rate," only chokes off and limits the inquiring mind:

> **The way to build taste—as has been recognized by some teachers in all of our historical periods—is to open new vistas rather than to shut off old ones. Everyone reads with pleasure at many different levels; even the sophisticated literary scholar has been known to admit that in (daily) moments of weakness he picks up the comic strips. It is a natural and perfectly wholesome response, and the base on which any more sophisticated response must build. (p.251)**

Two books by Sydney J. Parnes provided valuable background information on the philosophy of creative behavior and on nuturing creative problem-solving (*Creative Behavior Guidebook and Creative Behavior Workbook*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967). And an article by Donald J. Treffinger and Jaclyn R. Huber in the *The Journal of Creative Behavior* ("Designing Instruction in Creative Problem-Solving: Preliminary Objectives and Learning Hierarchies," v. 9, 1975, 260-265) gave us ideas for some specific objectives on developing alternative ways of responding and on identifying a variety of criteria for evaluating which we could incorporate into our own course objectives.

Finally, we chose Robert Pirsig's

fictional memoir, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance—An Inquiry Into Values* (Bantam, 1976), as the textbook for Creative Inquiry. Although this paperback book was to be mainly supplemental reading for students, it contained many of the important ideas that we wanted students to come away with from our course, and it served as a reference point for several classroom activies. Pirsig's basic notion is that there are two categories of mind sets among people: romantic and technological. The technologically-minded shut out aesthetic appreciation, while the romantics reject any understanding of machines. Pirsig analyzes the disharmony and self-defeating conflict between these two outlooks on life. We thought that the book particularly related to our course because it suggests that one should cultivate an open mind when considering and inquiring into values. One of the course objectives that we settled upon for Creative Inquiry stems directly from *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance:* "Students will demonstrate, through various class assignments, not only an increased sensitivity to the artists' role in popular culture, but a heightened awareness of the relationship between technological and romantic life styles and thought processes." Some of the other key course objectives that we adopted for Creative Inquiry were:

- **as a result of the semester's learning experience, the student should be able to open up alternatives and visualize consequences to the questioning process of decision making.**
- **given a cluster of possible responses to works of art, students will be able to identify a variety of criteria for evaluating quality in modes of art and to make some judgements on art.**
- **students will be able to break away from habit-bound thinking by developing many alternative ways of responding (written and visual) to specific assignments.**
- **each student will be able to experience the creative process (creative learning, creative problem solving, creative ideas, etc.), not only at his own level and with his own raw material, but in collaboration with others.**

ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT RESPONSES

Although Creative Inquiry was open to all students, it was composed mainly of Graphic Communications majors. Therefore, we set out to devise activities that would require students to use Art and English communicative and creative skills to solve problems, especially problems that they might encounter in the advertising business. We will describe the key activities in detail, from the general lesson plan and specific wording of assignments to some of the resource materials that we used. The six major activities we describe below were presented in order of difficulty and complexity. For at least half of the assignments, we allowed two options: to work alone or in a small group, and to create either a written or a visual response.

Envelope Covering and Designing a Greeting Card. During the first week of classes, we asked students to sort through stacks of magazines we had collected, and to clip out catchy slogans and attractive illustrations from advertisements that said something about somebody they knew. Then, the students arranged the clippings on the front and back of a business-size envelope so that there was some message. The bits and pieces of magazine ads, once suitably composed on the envelope, were dry mounted with rubber cement (the back flap was left free). This simple exercise was a warm-up in visual literacy for the next task: designing a greeting card.

First, we discussed advertising word gimmicks and various appeals to consumers. Then as a class, we looked at examples of greeting cards and discussed their visual and verbal techniques. We talked about the importance of the front of the card (teasers, lead-in puns, provocative illustrations, etc.), about the various categories of greeting cards (Friendship, Get Well, Christmas, etc.), about current trends in greeting cards, and about different methods for brainstorming card ideas (re-writes, association, etc.) Finally, we had each student design a greeting card. The cards had to contain verbal and visual components. We suggested that students keep in mind the kind of card being designed (Birthday, Sympathy, etc.) and the specific person they intended to send it to. The visual portion of the card could be drawn or painted, or composed of clippings from magazines. The verbal element had to be made up of transfer type lettering. The cards took about two 100-minute class sessions to complete. Many of the cards were loaded with puns and extended metaphors, while others were built around original poems. A valuable resource for this unit was Kirk Polking's *How You Can Make Money in Your Spare Time By Writing* (Writer's Digest, 1971).

Designing a Book or Album Cover. Our next activity seemed to be a logical step in terms of difficulty and content. By asking students to design a book or a record album cover, we were combining creative graphic interpretation with the ability to perceive the qualities of a literary character. In order to lead up to the actual assignment, we showed a slide-tape presentation based on an interview with illustrator Milton Glaser, in which he discusses album covers, book covers, and posters that he designed. Then we distributed dittoed sheets with excerpts from Shakespeare's *Othello, Henry IV Part I,* and *Hamlet.* The excerpts were selected for their value as "tag lines" lines of dialogue which tell a great deal about a character. Next we exhibited Milton Glaser cover designs for the paperback Signet Classic editions of *Othello, Henry IV Part I,* and *Hamlet* and discussed how Glaser interpreted visually the *persona* of the respective main characters.

Finally, borrowing ideas from Walker Gibson's *Persona—A Style Study for Readers and Writers* (Random House, 1969), we distributed the opening paragraphs of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, David Copperfield,* and *The Catcher in the Rye.* Without identifying the works, we asked students to choose one of the four *persona* excerpts,

get as strong a sense of the character as possible by analyzing his/her diction, values, background, etc., and design a book or album cover interpreting that character. The visual techniques could be: in a drawing (abstract or concrete); by looking through magazines and newspapers for similar characters to assemble; or, in ink and color wash. The design could be on any scale. No lettering or title was required. The most helpful book on cover design is Kirk Weidemann's *Book Jackets and Record Covers—An International Survey* (Praeger, 1969).

Duplicating a Visual Distortion or Abstraction. Since several students had designed abstract book covers, we thought it would be appropriate to talk about distortion and abstraction. In order to teach the concept of abstraction, we started out with a section from Pirsig's *Zen* book which discusses the concrete, exact, scientific language of instructions for assembling rotisseries. The speaker in the book points out that such technical writing need not be so chopped up and scientific; sets of instructions can be creative, a bit abstract (*Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, pp.157-260). We showed a slide-tape presentation, which we produced and narrated, demonstrating the gradual abstraction process an artist experiences in discovering and arriving at his completed visual expression. Next, we displayed editorial cartoons done by Tom Toles of the Buffalo *Courier-Express* and discussed with students how he uses exaggeration and distortion to deliver a distinct message. We then spent some time talking about types of literary satire and we viewed a short film on satire, *Parcels* (Contemporary/McGraw-Hill, 1972). We also gathered helpful ideas from a film *Pas de Deux* (National Film Board of Canada).

Finally, we asked students to look at the distortion of some form(s) through a glass, or a toaster, or as reflected on the hood of a car, etc., and to duplicate exactly what was being distorted, either by duplicating it visually, or by describing in writing what they saw.

Pop Art Sculpture. We believe that the distortion activity prepared students for the next five class sessions on pop art. First, we read some pop poetry and some found poetry, *i.e.*, bits of prose that have been transplanted into a new, lyrical, poetic setting. We viewed a movie on found art objects (*The Magic Machines*, Stern, 1970). Then, we described some of the elements of pop art and read from some interviews with pop artists. Finally, we divided the classes into small groups of three or four students. We asked each small group to construct a pop art sculpture out of papier mache. Once each group decided upon what commercial object to describe three dimensionally, they constructed the appropriate huge papier mache form, painted, and varnished it. One group created three one-and-one-half foot large salted pretzels accompanied by a four foot by two foot "can" of beer. Another group built a giant chewing gum box, with sticks of gum extending out of an open end. Helpful books on pop art are Suzi Gablik and John Russell, *Pop Art Redefined* (Praeger, 1970); and Ronald Gross, *Pop Poems* (Simon and Schuster, 1967).

Composing Commercial Jingles. We next applied two of Pirsig's concerns in *Zen*, maintaining the fine arts within a commercial world and articulating quality that exists within things (pp. 210-320), to popular music. We went down the list of current Top 40 songs, listening to students discuss their varying opinions on the songs and talking about different tastes in music. Then, we mentioned a few popular songwriters (Paul Williams, Barry Manilow) who have composed award-winning, high quality commercial jingles. Next, we sang and played on guitar a few jingles that the two of us had composed together for local businesses—just to show students that it is not an impossible task.

The problem which we posed for the students (again, working in groups) read as follows:

> Create an original commercial jingle—a usable one for radio/TV—either for Villa Maria College or for Eaton Office Supply, Inc. The jingle consists of words and music. Your final version should be intended for play over the air. If you want, you can include accompanying ad copy to be read during/after/in between the jingle (but, the ad copy is optional). Don't be satisfied with the first one that you do. Brainstorm. Make lists of possible catchy, creative words and phrases associated with characteristics of your product (*i.e.*, a college and an office supply company). Play around with alternatives; substitute a new word for an old one. Pound out a few rough melodies on a piano, guitar or harmonica. Use a kazoo, or just hum your melody. What type of instrument is most appropriate for the theme and mood of your jingle? Experiment with some tunes until you find one that fits, one that works for you. The jingles should be ready for serious recording next week. Be sure to bring with you all the necessary instruments, voices, etc.

We held two class sessions in the practice rooms of our Music Institute, helping students experiment with melodies on piano and guitar, brainstorming for attention-getting phrases, and monitoring their rehearsals. Among the best student jingles were one for the College built around a country-western theme which opened with, "Villa Maria College, Come On Down!" and which was sung to the tune of "Old MacDonald's Farm," and one for Eaton Office Supply, Inc., which had a pleasing, slow, original piano melody intended to suggest the fifty-six years of distinctive service by the company.

Multi-Media Final Project. The final project that we required offered students the opportunity to use art, literature, and music in creating what we called a "reaction monograph." We hoped that the reaction monograph would represent a culmination of the course activities, that it would allow students to demonstrate how they had developed their awareness of things around them and how they had increased their skills in responding. Before explaining some of our own suggestions for project ideas, we read a line from *Zen* which describes how a careful observation of everyday things can reveal new insights: "I have seen these marshes a thousand times, yet each time they're new." (p. 7).

Then, we listed a few possible forms

that the reaction monographs might take (although students were encouraged to follow through on their own ideas):

- take a walk around your neighborhood. Carry a notebook with you and write down what you see—the shapes, the sounds, the colors, the smells, the tastes, the landscape (or, tape record your observations while walking). Take photographs (or do illustrations). Do a visual response with accompanying written narrative entitled, "Neighborhood Scene," in which you organize and interpret these isolated details into some pattern.
- take a photographic approach to literature. Take photographs or make slides based on a poem or on a scene from a short story. Or, use song lyrics which are written out, photographed, and taped with appropriately synchronized musical background.
- you might respond in writing and visually to meaningful quotes, poems, and excerpts from essays that you have collected. Each visual illustration should be consistent with its accompanying text and should be thematic in its overall format.

We were impressed with many of the projects. One student did a photographic interpretation of selected lines from the poetry of Robert Frost. Another student took her own photographs of different types of stairways, and wrote an original text about the functions that the stairways serve and the kind of people most likely to use them. Still another student assembled a slide and tape presentation on the song, "Hair," consisting of over fifty slides. Two students, in collaboration, interpreted visually the title song from Carole King's *Tapestry* album. Their cover (whose design resembled King's album cover) and the insert pages were in the disc-like shape of a record on construction paper of assorted colors. The pages were hinged by a "hole" in the record. Each circular page contained a written line from the song and an illustration.

Evaluation and Grading

From the earliest planning stages of this course, we recognized that placing a grade on so many creative tasks in different modes might be difficult. However, we feel that the sets of criteria that we finally devised for the various activities were specific enough to give students some direction, yet general enough not to hamper their creativity. We graded each activity on a scale of 1 - 5 (poor to excellent). The evaluation

and grading schemes were criterion-referenced, since we published and discussed our standard, or the main features that we would be looking for, before students began to work on each assignment. The evaluation procedure was as follows: once all of the completed student work was submitted to us, both of us would meet and go over each piece together. Even though it meant an occasional compromise of our individual preferences for a grade, we generally came to agreement without too much deliberation. Once everything was graded (usually it took an entire afternoon), we would set aside part of the next class meeting for a group critique. Everyone would gather around one table on which we placed the student works. Then, we all informally gave opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of each piece, within the framework of the criterion for the assignment.

The evaluative criteria that we devised for most of the verbal/visual activities (envelope covering and greeting card, *persona* book cover, and multi-media final project) looked like this:

- EFFECTIVENESS OF DESIGN
  a. Concept
  b. Communication of message, theme, or subject
- EFFECTIVENESS OF MECHANICS
  a. Craftsmanship
  b. Instructional Details (following the directions)
- AESTHETIC POTENTIAL
  a. Individuality (little assistance needed)
  b. Little Individuality (needed much assistance)

The pop art sculptures and jingles required different criteria. The papier mache pop art sculptures were graded for their adherence to specific characteristics of pop art (mass producible, youthful, easily identifiable, American, etc.) and for the workmanship put into the sculptures. The criteria that we set up for the advertising jingles involved an evaluation of several dimensions of creative activity, and required a carefully performed final taped version:

- LANGUAGE/RHETORIC
  a. appropriateness of vocabulary and terms for the subject. Do the words used fit the vocabulary of a college or of an office supply company?
  b. are the words, phrases, rhymes, puns, etc., catchy, attractive and attention-getting, or are they the same old advertising cliches? Did the jingle writers strive for creative, fresh expressions?
- MUSIC
  a. does the tune/melody fit the mood, theme, and purpose of the jingle? Is there an attempt to match the tone and purpose

of the wording with the melody?

b. is the instrumentation (kinds of instruments) and/or vocalization appropriate for the mood, theme, and purpose? Was the instrumentation/vocalization obviously planned and rehearsed?

- QUALITY OF FINAL TAPE
  a. is the final tape of the jingle playable for radio or TV, or are there many "rough" spots?

CONCLUSIONS

When our pilot semester in Creative Inquiry ended, we took time out to draw some conclusions. From an instructional point of view, the course had been exhausting and time-consuming (we were always both in the classroom at the same time, we met together for evaluating and grading student work throughout the semester, and we spent a great deal of time planning the course and preparing visual aids). However, our efforts to combine art, music, and literature seemed to be successful in challenging the creative capacities of most of the students. The results of a written student course evaluation showed predominantly positive responses to the course as a whole. Although several students objected to our choice of Pirsig's *Zen* for a textbook (because it was too abstract and difficult to read), and despite the fact that a few students remained uncomfortable working in small groups, most of the students' written remarks commented on how the course made them more open-minded, more willing to consider artistic expressions in a variety of modes, more aware of what is going on around them, and more likely to draw upon their own creative abilities:

> The assignments forced me to do things that I was sure that I would never be able to do, because I had never attempted anything like them. But, I surprised myself—they all turned out pretty good and were worth the time spent doing them. One important thing I got from the class is that it really made me aware of things that I wouldn't have noticed, understood, or cared about before.
>
> I actually didn't mind coming to class and I think it was a valuable experience. The value was that it touched so many areas. We were briefed in art, music, and literature, which are all worth something to most people.
>
> I enjoyed doing all the assignments and as a result have gained much confidence in my own creative ability.

When we teach Creative Inquiry again, we will probably try to identify students who prefer to work alone earlier in the course and make more careful attempts to integrate them into small group work. We also might design some growth measurement schemes, like an attitude scale on creative ability or one on attitudes toward the fine arts to be given at the beginning and end of the course. Or, we might give a similar task (like designing a greeting card) at the beginning and end in order to measure any improvement. When we teach Creative Inquiry again, though, one thing we won't do is to give up on *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* as a textbook. In order to make the reading more "palatable," we might prepare students early in the course for Pirsig's theories by familiarizing them with the rules of logic and inductive and deductive reasoning. But, *Zen* will remain our text, since it is not only our responsibility to present a wide variety of material in art, literature and music, but also to nurture creative, inquiring minds, and to help each student discover "how much one should maintain one's own motorcycle." ■

LONG HILL MAN

"They say he stayed here for seven years, then returned to New Hampshire, maybe to outlive the Statute of Limitations."

First, not he who occupied this space, mossed
over and thickly shrouded with spruce and birches,
but what he left behind: rusted pick-axe,
twisted metal hanger, faded flowered juiceglass that
once held cheese, bottle half-full of soured wine;
then scattered planks and broken panes which
but for noisy dreams and timely mutterings
would have collapsed for loneliness.

On the trail back we follow the droppings
of deer, heavy with a history we cannot understand,
against the pull of sloping ground.
For all we know about his meanness
we want him now, this solitary man, lumberjack . . . hermit,
who carried his humanness beyond his territory
to crossroads he never dreamed of.

Beverly Lawn

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CAREER EDUCATION

and the English Curriculum

Peter Finn

Career Education and the English Teacher

In the past few years, education, labor, industry, and government alike have become increasingly aware of two mutually exacerbating elements in the contemporary occupational and educational scene. On the one hand, radical and continuing changes have been taking place in our society, from urbanization to automation, that have drastically altered the number and types of occupations available and changed the skills needed to enter and succeed in many of them. As the result of these trends, most of the 45 million new jobs that will be available in the 1970's will be open *only* to people who have appropriate education and skill training; moreover, there will be serious shortages of trained workers in a wide variety of occupations while there will be an overabundance of qualified workers in others.

At the same time that profound social trends in society are altering the nature and needs of the work force, education, on the other hand, is failing to equip students to cope with this changing employment picture. Two and a half million young people leave school each year without a saleable skill as public school dropouts, as graduates from a high school "general curriculum" which has prepared them neither for a job nor for further education, or as college dropouts without a degree or an occupational skill. Thus, while society's employment needs are in a state of transition, education has failed to adapt its curriculum to prepare students to contend with these changes.

To fill this educational gap and prepare youngsters for the job openings which will be available and will interest them, school systems have been rapidly making career education a high priority academic goal. However, career education has, by and large, remained a separate and distinct curriculum area. As a result, students who have taken advantage of it have done so at the expense of other courses. Recently, therefore, career educators have been seeking to combine career education with subject area teaching. They have also pointed out that students learn more about careers and do so with greater relish and understanding when they study them in the context of subject matter related to the specific occupations they are investigating.

Concurrent with this concern to integrate career education into the traditional subject areas, teachers in many different disciplines have been searching for ways to relate their own subject area skills and information to the real world of work. Such teachers realize that integrating career education into their courses—in addition to its obvious job awareness value—can make a significant contribution to the student's grasp of course material and motivation to study it diligently. English teachers, for example, have been troubled by their students' failure to perceive the relevance of spelling and grammar, and even of reading and writing, to the economic facts of life. Today's generation of school children is not always interested in reading literature "for its own sake" and insists on asking, "How can studying Shakespeare get me a job?"

There are three important ways in which integrating career education activities into language arts courses can help achieve English subject area objectives.

First, while engaging in career education activities, students will learn a great deal about English *topics* related to the career or occupation they are studying. For example, if a group of students visits backstage of a theatre and talks with the actors and actresses, stagehands, choreographers, set designers, and other theatre personnel, the pupils will learn much about how plays are written (e.g., stage directions) and about drama as a form of communication.

Second, many of the *skills* in the English curriculum will be developed or reinforced through the use of career education activities. For example, students who develop and use a questionnaire for interviewing theatre personnel will be able to practice in a relevant way such skills as writing, oral communication, questioning, drawing conclusions, and interpretation.

Finally, by including career education activities in English courses, teachers can increase their students' *motivation* to study and learn about English topics and develop related skills. For example, some students who take a field trip backstage to a theatre are likely to want to read more about theatre production. In this manner, career topics have the attractiveness of "relevance" for studying and learning English content matter and skills.

There are many ways in which career education can be integrated into Eng-

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lish courses so that career education and the subject area both benefit. Let us take as an example a career education activity in which students interview an employed person about the nature of his or her job and what he or she likes and dislikes about it. After the interview, the students write a brief character sketch or short story describing how this individual's personality might relate to his or her performance on the job. Conducting the interview and writing the story will help students to perceive both the relationship between job satisfaction and personality and also the characteristics of the job being examined. In addition to the above *career education* goals, a teacher can also use this activity to help achieve a number of *English* objectives. The activity can be introduced when students are studying short stories of character, such as O'Henry's "The Cop and the Anthem," D.H. Lawrence's "The Prussian Officer," or Daniel Keyes' "Flowers for Algernon." In this context, the activity can help students to understand characterization, draw conclusions, appreciate the short story as a form of literature, develop clarity of style, and learn occupational terminology—all of which are English objectives. By engaging in an activity which combines career education and English objectives, students will learn more about both occupations and the short story than if jobs and this form of literature are studied in isolation, because each aspect of the activity will deepen understanding of and interest in the other.

Useful Career Education Activities for the English Classroom

There are two kinds of career education activities which are appropriate to the English classroom. One type consists of activities that involve investigating those careers in which language arts skills are a major component of successful job performance. Typical occupational fields which require competency in one or more English skill areas include publishing, journalism, teaching, the theatre, social science research, library science, advertising, sales work, media fields, survey design, repair work and law. Studying these and similar careers will present to those students who are or can become proficient in language arts skills a variety of career options in which they can employ these skills. Studying these careers will also help all students to realize how essential language arts skills are for success in a variety of occupational endeavors.

A second type of appropriate career education activity requires using English skills in order to investigate the occupations being studied. For example, exploring any occupation by means of interviewing, questioning, writing, reading, public speaking, role playing, or notetaking will help students develop and reinforce important English skills in a meaningful context.

There are also several career education activities which combine the desirable features of both these career education activity types—that is, activities in which students must practice important English skills in order to research occupations in which proficiency in language arts skills is necessary for successful job performance. Students who interview theatre personnel, poll journalists and publishers, or role play attorneys, for example, will derive a double bonus in terms of the activity's relevance to the English curriculum.

The following suggested activities illustrate how teachers can periodically infuse career education into the English classroom and thereby enable students to develop practical skills and information related to English and at the same time explore concrete occupational opportunities in a relevant and exciting manner.

Whenever the class reads literature which describes an occupation or career, the teacher can spend a few moments discussing the job in such terms as:

- tasks it involves
- skills, information, or knowledge needed to be successful at it
- ethnic discriminatory behavior practiced in it
- why people enter it
- what types of people enter it
- fringe benefits and salary ranges it provides
- satisfactions it provides and frustrations it entails
- how it affects the employee's personality

From a literary point of view, the teacher can discuss why the author chose to mention the occupation, what the job may reveal about the protagonist's character, and the vocabulary used to describe the job. Examples of literature appropriate to English courses which describe one or more occupations in depth are provided in an appendix.

Students determine how English skills are used in different occupations by interviewing employed persons. Students can interview journalists, teachers, telephone operators, lawyers, publishers, advertisers, repair persons, actors and actresses, and librarians. The activity itself requires students to practice such English skills as writing, questioning, interpreting, note taking, public speaking, and oral communication. After conducting the interviews, students can identify which, if any, of these occupations interest them and which English skills are most closely associated with these jobs. Students can then consider concentrating on developing those particular skills while they are still in school.

Students can also make use of the information gleaned from their interviews and observations to write a short story, character sketch, or poem about a person employed in an occupation they researched. Using a different perspective, students can interview *consumers* of services provided by various workers to learn whether people perceive their own occupations as others do. Parents, relatives, and friends can be queried about how they view such people as barbers, hairdressers, auto mechanics, funeral directors, law enforcement officers, teachers and plumbers. Finally, students can invite one or more of the people they interviewed to class to discuss their occu-

pations and the use of English skills in their jobs.

Students role play conflicts arising from a career lifestyle. Any role play activity dealing with jobs can be easily integrated into an English course whenever the class is studying oral communication skills, public speaking, or drama. The teacher can supply the role profiles or students can develop their own. A set of sample role profiles follows:

Role A: You are Darroll Williams and have been teaching in the local elementary school for three years. You like your work and want to continue teaching. The salary is not essential, since your wife Theresa has a very good income as a high school principal. You have a three-year-old daughter who spends her days with your wife's aunt. You and your wife are out to dinner and you sense that something important is troubling her.

Role B. You are Theresa Williams and the local high school principal. Since taking this job, your salary and position in the community have risen greatly and, more importantly, you enjoy your work a great deal. You are proud of both. You feel that your husband Darroll should quit his job as an elementary school teacher and stay home with your three-year-old daughter who has been spending her days with your aunt. Your salary is certainly enough to support your family. You have gone out to dinner, hoping to have a quiet time in which to discuss the issue. You look across the table at your husband. What do you say?

Students simulate the jobs of survey designer, pollster, and journalist by developing and administering a poll and then writing a newspaper story and interpreting the responses. Students can pick an issue related to some aspect of language arts (e.g., how many books, articles, and newspaper do community residents read in the average month and why do they read them); they can select a controversial occupational issue around which to develop the poll (for example, company quotas for hiring ethnic persons or women); or they can choose a particular occupation or career and interview workers in that field. As follow-up, students can discuss what a reporter's, survey designer's, and pollster's jobs are like and then identify what English skills are needed to develop, administer, and interpret a poll.

Students tour backstage of a theatre that is preparing to or currently staging a play and interview the staff. In addition to questions about each job's major responsibilities, students can also ask:

- Is there a lot of pressure to get things done on time for the next show or next act?
- Do you find it exciting or interesting to be around (famous) actors and actresses? Do you find that some of them fit the stereotype of being "temperamental" or "vain"?
- What skills do you need to perform your tasks and where and how did you learn them?
- How do you find out exactly what you have to do for a particular play? Does the playwright provide instructions or does the director tell you what to do?
- How much opportunity is there for you to be creative or exercise initiative in what you do? Do you have to "stick to" exactly what the playwright wrote or the director instructs you to do?
- How much does a dramatist need to know about your job to be able to write a successful play?

Students tour a newspaper, magazine or book publishing firm and conduct interviews with the employees. This activity, while it involves discussion and practice of reading and writing, can in particular be used to develop and practice editing skills. In addition to questions about salaries, promotion opportunities, and fringe benefits, students can also ask employees the following kinds of questions:

- What is it like to work under the pressure of a daily (weekly, monthly) deadline?
- Is the job of a reporter exciting because of the people you meet or the places you visit? Is it frustrating because of editorial changes made in your articles?
- What is the writing level of most of the materials you publish before you edit them? How much and what kind of editing do you have to do? What is the background of the people who edit manuscripts?
- How do you try to ensure objectivity in what you write or publish?
- What is and how do you justify your policy for reporting sex and violence?

At the end of the tour, the students should request a short sample of both the unedited and edited version of a newspaper article, magazine article, or portion of a book to take home. As homework or later in class, students can compare the differences in the two versions and apply what they learn to their own writing. ■

Appendix

*Literary Works Common to the English Classroom Which Describe One or More Occupations in Depth**

Novels

To Kill a Mockingbird, by Harper Lee (lawyer)

Ethan Frome, by Edith Wharton (farmer)

The Assistant, by Bernard Malamud (shopkeeper, store clerk)

To Sir with Love, by E. R. Braithwaite (teacher, principal)

Advise and Consent, by Allan Drury (politican)

The Pawnbroker, by Edward Wallant (shopkeeper)

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, by Ken Kesey (nurse, nurse's aide)

The Last Hurrah, by Edwin O'Connor (politician)

Arrowsmith, by Sinclair Lewis (doctor, medical researcher)

An American Tragedy, by Theodore Dreiser (attorney, businessman)

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, by Hannah Green (psychiatrict, nurse's aide)

Sons and Lovers, by D. H. Lawrence (coal miner)

Short Stories

"Flowers for Algernon," by Daniel Keyes *(doctors and nurses)*

"The Egg," by Sherwood Anderson *(small restaurant owner)*

"The Far and the Near," by Thomas Wolfe *(railroad engineer)*

"A Visit of Charity," by Eudora Welty *(nursing home staff)*

"The Patented Gate and the Mean Hamburger," by Robert Penn Warren *(diner operator)*

"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," by James Thurber *(variety of jobs described to which students can add by continuing the story themselves)*

Play

Death of a Salesman, by Arthur Miller

Poems

"A Civil Servant," by Robert Graves

"Dolor," by Theodore Roethke *(office worker)*

"Eleven," by Archibald MacLeish *(gardener)*

"Night Shift," by Sylvia Plath *(factory worker)*

"The Gresford Disaster," anonymous *(miners)*

"What Is He?," by D. H. Lawrence *(cabinet maker)*

"Buyers and Sellers," by Carl Sandburg *(laborers)*

"A politician is an arse upon," by e. e. cummings

"Jazz Fantasia," by Carl Sandburg *(jazz musician)*

* Compiled by Myrna Finn.

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

I save them all from going over
the edge. The record that you hear

is probably unique by now, the piece
forgotten, the composer in his grave.

Here are some books of which
the same might well be said.

Nothing but my remembrance keeps
them whole, or even partial; they'll

last, like a memory, because
one mind preserves them. So

the world is saved: pulled back
from folly's brink, not by frick

and louvre merely, no; by me:
touring museum, guide, and crowd.

John Ditsky

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Herbert Safran

It was while reading Elie Wiesel's *Night* that I contemplated an elective English course about the literature of the Holocaust of World War II. I decided to suggest to the administration (the principal, the assistant superintendent for academic affairs, and through him, the local board of education), that such a class would be valuable to our suburban (and mainly Christian) high school. In the fall of each year, our department surveys the present tenth and eleventh graders to determine their interests in electives for the following year. As department Chairman, I asked my colleagues for proposals for additions or deletions to our present twenty-six course offerings. It was at our meeting in October that I suggested a course dealing with the literature of the Holocaust.

It was greeted with comments like, "Sounds great." "There ought to be a course like that." "What will you be reading?" "How many essays will you be doing?" "Will there be any opportunity for interdisciplinary activities?" "Any project work? Speakers?" "Would there be a place for basic skills?" (This was from my traditionalist, of course.) One teacher called out, "Hold on!" and hurriedly left the room. He returned with a course outline entitled "The Holocaust: The Jewish Ordeal in Nazi Occupied Europe, 1933-45" which he had found in the New York *Teacher*. "Do you think we'll have enough student interest to offer it?" inquired one colleague. That was the key question as far as I was concerned.

We are a suburban school midway between Albany and Saratoga with a miniscule Jewish population. Yet, in a high school of some 2,000 in grades 10-12 and a junior-senior student body of 1300 students eligible for the elective program, we did find that 150 young people expressed interest in the course from our initial survey and that

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Journey into the KINGDOM OF NIGHT:

they actually signed up during the registration period in March and April for the 10-week course.

The initial steps were taken: the department approved; the principal and assistant superintendent for academic affairs—the other section of the power-structure-for-change—approved after reading the three criteria for acceptance (the proposed course outline; standards for students; and evaluation procedures). Next was the final administrative hurdle: the local board of education. I saw to it that each board member had his own copy of the course outline.

When the course was brought up for discussion before the board some weeks later, there were a few raised eyebrows, a pointed question about the efficacy of such a course, and a compliment from one board member about the English elective program meeting "the needs and interests of our students."

The board agreed and the vote was unanimous.

A stipend for summer reading and preparation of classroom materials was also approved for me, and I was ready to begin my preparations in earnest. I read and I wept over Wiesel's *Legends of Our Time*, and *The Oath;* I sighed after reading *Treblinka* (Steiner); I clenched my fists while reading *Babi Yar* (Kuznetsov), *Voyage of the Damned* (Thomas and Witts), *Last of the Just* (Schwarz-Bart) and Uris' works, *Mila 18, QBVII, Exodus;* I shook my head in disbelief while reading *Auschwitz* (Nyiszli), and *The Wall* (Hersey); I detested the world and my own country while studying *The Holocaust: Destruction of European Jewry 1933-45),* and *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (Morse); and yes, I was even appalled at the Jews who refused to leave Rumania when given the opportunity in *The Last Escape* (Kluger and Mann).

I became a sadder person that summer after submerging myself into the literature of the Holocaust. My wife and children would come upon me in my study and find me, book in hand, head nodding in despair over the tragedy that I, too, had watched from the sidelines. I cried for the six million; and I cried for myself.

September: the start of school and beginning of the course. With determination and some trepidation, I met my first group of 25 eleventh and twelfth graders (we mix the juniors and seniors in our elective program) by distributing a blank sheet of paper to everyone.

On the board I wrote these two words, "The Holocaust", and under them, vertically, these questions: 1) Who? 2)What? 3)When? 4)Where? 5) Why? "Please put your name on the paper, copy these questions and respond to them," I directed.

There were blank stares, shrugged shoulders, a raised hand and a voice plaintively inquired from the back of the room, "What about the date?"

Undaunted, I announced the date and continued, "Just answer the questions. You will have five minutes," I intoned in my most serious manner. And at the end of the time limit, I collected the papers—mostly blank; but some had a few adequate responses.

The next aspect of the lesson called for a definition of the word "Holocaust." Upon getting a workable one (after a few tries), I told them to keep a section in their notebooks for vocabulary words encountered in our 10-week study. The first word then was "Holocaust;" the second was "genocide;" the third was "Hitler." By now most of them remembered the content of the course which they read about and registered for six months before.

After distributing copies of the course outline with its objectives, content, and composition activities, I proceeded to explain the format of the class, my expectations for them, the pre-test they just had and the post-test they could expect ten weeks later; and then I informed them of the speakers/tapes (audio and video) we would be having. Next, I gave them a list of some fifteen works (most of which I have already mentioned) and pointed out the three that we'd do as a class. In addition, each student would have to read any two or three of the other titles for their major written project.

By then I was out of breath, they were having second and probably third thoughts about ever having signed up for the course, and the Pavlovian bell buzzed into our collective consciousness.

On the second day of the course, I began the lesson by commenting about the previous day's written exercise. I announced the class average (it ranged from 3.1 to 5.0 out of 10 for the six sections that first year) and assured them (and myself) that a similar test

at the conclusion of the course would show an improved score. The content of the course then commenced with the chronology of post World War I events in Europe—especially in Germany.

I reiterated for the students my four basic objectives for the course, similar to the rationale presented to the board of education:

- to introduce students to the basic events of the Holocaust and to raise with them the many questions that still haunt rational men some 30 years later;
- to enable the students to realize that when society practices cruel and inhuman punishment on one minority, no one is safe;
- to have my students gain empathy for one of mankind's traditional scapegoats;
- to sensitize students to the fact and practice of man's barbarisms to his fellow man because of ignorance and fear of superficial differences.

I proceeded to explain the written requirements and standards for the course. Required were two essays based on Elie Wiesel's works (*Night* and *Legends of Our Time*). Students were to react to one concept in the latter work and to substantiate Wiesel's symbolic choice of title for the former.

Not to be forgotten were the three or four spelling and vocabulary quizzes given during the quarter. Words were taken from their reading and class discussions in order to integrate basic language arts skills into each course of the elective program.

A seven-week project required students to write a documented paper (footnote and bibliography format must be taught) using at least two references which showed one era of history when man persecuted a minority group. I suggested to the class that they might want to investigate their own national backgrounds first for a specific group to research. Or, they might select the era of Jewish persecution using the half-dozen titles (about 10 copies of each) I was able to supply them. Since I do have a heterogeneous group, the reading levels of the books vary, from the easier: Uris, *Mila 18;* Nyiszlie, *Auschwitz;* Elkins, *Forged in Fury;* Boehm, *Fourteen Survived;* and Goodrich and Hackett, *Diary of Anne Frank*, to the more complex: Schwarz-Bart, *Last of the Just;* and Wiesel, *The Oath*. To those who appeared to be more interested in this era, I provided my own copies of Steiner, *Treblinka;* Thalmann, *Crystal Night;* Kuznetsov, *Babi Yar;* Thomas and Witts, *Voyage of the Damned;* Kluger and Mann, *The Last Escape;* and a recent definitive work by Dawidowicz, *War Against the Jews (1933-45)*. The latest book, Rabinowitz, *New Lives*, portrays some survivors of the Holocaust who came to live in America.

In addition to the historical overview of the era (political, economic, social), their paper would include a précis of the books they read; a specific incident from each book which reveals the most shocking event *vis à vis* persecution; an aspect of human nature acquired from their reading; actions other governments and everyday citizens took to stop the outrages, and some concluding remarks to tie the paper together.

The third book used by the entire class, more as a contrast to the deeper more philosophical and metaphysical works of Weisel, was Forsyth's popular novel, *Odessa File*. Those students who found *Legends* a bit "heavy" found plenty of suspense, action, perhaps more than a hint of sex and a sense that the kingdom of evil, if not totally vanquished, at least was made to flee the scene permanently.

I tried to vary lesson presentations during the 10 weeks of the course. Once we were into the literature, I endeavored to end each class session with a thought-provoking question; and I began the next day's lesson with this same question, noticeably involving different members of the class each day for their interpretations or reactions. By the way, students were required to make note of their peers' more meaningful comments for use in the *Legends of Our Time* essay.

In addition to the typical give-and-take discussions about Wiesel's works, I invited a number of guest speakers into the class, or I had their comments and experiences available on audio cassettes. Two colleagues showed slides and gave their impressions of recent visits to Dachau and Auschwitz; then there was a German instructor, a former member of the Hitler Youth, who spoke about his experience in Germany during those years. I had a young lad whose parents were abducted from Estonia to Germany during the war and whose relatives were liquidated by the Russians after 1945 speak to the group: I played a tape of an interview conducted with one of my staff members' father who resided in Austria during the Anschluss and who witnessed the degradation of the Jews by Nazis. I showed paintings and photos, and I had available on permanent display a book of paintings by Alfred Kantor. The starkness and cruelty of the Nazis are easily discerned by all students.

April 1975 marked the 32nd anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Elie Wiesel spoke in New York City and a colleague, Anthony McCann, who is also teaching this course, journeyed with me to listen to and record his presentation. His theme of remembrance was identical to the theme of our class. This tape is a highlight of the course.

If I may be permitted to digress from my outlining of the program, I will tell those who might be thinking of offering this class, *be prepared to weep as you read the literature in preparation for the class.* I found myself choked up many times as I read and studied these examples of man's inhumanity and self-imposed tragedy. A sincere teacher of literature must, as a basis for being true to his students, be sensitive, be empathic and place himself in the shadow of his characters as he reads and discusses the materials.

There are many worthy activities besides the typical classroom discussion to enhance this course. I took students to lectures having to do with the Holocaust. I compiled creative contributions from all six classes into a magazine of the poems, drawings, and reactions to some aspect of the course that

students took the time to prepare (for extra credit). This was for end-of-the-year distribution to the 150 students of the program. It's interesting to note that 147 of the magazines were picked up.

By the time the final project was returned the day before each quarter's end, and the books collected, I was ready to administer the post-test. I found the tendency of the students when asked the same "who, what, when, where, why" questions about the Holocaust was to be more sensitive, descriptive, and analytical in their responses. That was satisfying, but it wasn't until I collected the mostly unsigned course critiques during the last day of each quarter that I felt a sense of well-being.

In response to the question about the aim of the course, no instructor could have asked for better reactions. Certain phrases perhaps ought to be quoted here: "A holocaust can occur anywhere and we are the ones who could stop it;" "...to make us aware of the tragedy and to prevent it from happening again;" "...prejudice leads to inhumanity...we must become more compassionate...;" and the most succinct: "Not to forget!"

Although the majority thought the class discussion without fear of giving wrong "answers" was the most worthwhile classroom procedure, fully a third felt the guest speakers, especially the men from Germany and Vienna, were a highlight of the course, because they were actual witnesses to the history of the times being studied.

Although there wasn't a single most downgraded classroom activity, there were criticisms about the poor quality of some of the tapes I played, the spelling and vocabulary quizzes, and a couple of nays for the essays and the quarterly project. Surprisingly, many students wanted more factual quizzes on the books read for class discussion. I can only surmise they wanted to have their grades based more on specific content matter in addition to the papers.

About half the group wanted me to drop *Legends of Our Time* for future class reading while the other half thought it was valuable for the classes to study. The same held true for two supplementary books, *Mila 18* and *Forged in Fury*. I expect to continue using them with the admonition to future classes about diverse tastes in literature.

The final question on the critique is: "Man doesn't seem to have changed from the Christian persecutions to the Jewish outrage. (There have been six examples of genocide since 1945: Kurds in Iraq; non-Moslem blacks in Sudan; Chinese in Indonesia; Ibos in Nigeria; Bengalis in Pakistan; and Hutus in Burundi as well as the recent obscenity in Lebanon.) What is your prognosis for mankind eventually eliminating the concept of a scapegoat?" The combined response was universal in all classes: "When people do not object to the persecution of any group, then the despots use this apathy to accomplish their aims...." "As long as man struggles to be superior to those around him, there will be a need of a scapegoat to rationalize his insecurities...he needs one to justify his own inabilities...." And my two classics, "No way," and "Not a heck of a lot of chance." However, I take pride in one student's response, one whose philosophy and outlook must prevail if we are to learn our lessons from history: "I think people have learned from past mistakes and are smarter now. There will no longer be a need for a scapegoat."

And to this optimistic view, I say *Amen*.

Post note: For a variety of reasons, the course has now been expanded to 20 weeks. The added length allows for small group discussions of the outside readings. While the teacher is engaged in this activity, the rest of the class is working on the quarterly project or reading the supplementary works.■

Photograph by Deborah Hoss

PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

and the Teaching of Poetry

Stanley Bank

The purpose of this article is to show that some of the basic, commonly accepted findings of psycholinguistics can have a direct and practical impact on our students' ability to read poetry, and that teachers of English should consider those findings in organizing their courses and in teaching the language of poetry. Let me say first that I abhor the thought of turning students into junior psycholinguists (or any *ists*) rather than into sensitive common readers. I have no teaching "method" or interpretative system to sponsor. Rather, I would like to apply the findings, not the methods, of psycholinguistics to the process of reading literature. The findings that concern me may be listed as follows:

1. The acquisition of language is the process of learning the rules which connect the deep structure (meaning) of an utterance to surface structures (sounds, print).
2. These rules cannot be taught directly but are learned through the process of discovering patterns and testing those patterns through feedback.
3. The process of reading is the process of reconstructing language, of which decoding is merely a part. Reading is an activity in which the whole and its parts are in constant interaction: the fluent reader goes from the visual stimulus to deep structure, not to surface structure. We read meanings; we do not read letters or words.

From these principles we may generalize about the reading of poetry.

Since the system of cues in a poem which signals such responses as intonation—stress, pitch and juncture—is different from the system in prose, the student must be enabled to develop a system of rules for the interpretation of those cues.

Since the stanzaic form of a poem is a syntactic cue to intonation, and, through patterning, to meaning, the student must be enabled to develop a system of rules for the interpretation of those cues.

Since language elements which are cues in prose might be more developed meanings in poetry (e.g. sounds and sound patterns, connotations, metaphoric language, ambifuity), the student must be enabled to change his pattern of reading to accomodate a deeply different written language, one which provides different redundancies, a different deep as well as surface structure, and one which requires him to reconstruct sound and meaning simultaneously. He reads meaning, but he must hear the sound as he does so, and the sound must provide feedback on the basis of which he must modify the meaning. In general, linguistic devices which may be accidental or ornamental in prose are organic in poetry and provide cues to basic meaning. Perhaps the appeal to the young reader of metaphysical poetry lies in the startling quality of the metaphors, for that quality calls the reader's conscious attention to them. The subtler devices tend to go unnoticed, not because the student is a poor reader, but because he is a good one. (The better reader makes less use of meditated word or phrase identification, and so is less apt to notice specifics in the surface structure.)

Reading poetry, then, requires the acquisition of the language of poetry, so that the linguistic signals of the poem are perceived as powerfully as the signals of ordinary language are. Many students already have this ability in a limited number of poetic forms, most likely the limerick and the common nursery rhyme. This ability does not stem from the simplicity of the forms (the limerick is far from simple), but rather from the students' non-analytic, internalized familiarity with them. And it is this type of familiarity with form and language which we must foster in our students if they are to become able to respond directly to the "sonnetness" of a sonnet, for example, to the signals of meter and rhyme, to the sensual impact of imagery, to the doubleness of metaphoric language.

In that watershed of systematic thought applied to the study of literature, *Theory of Literature* (2nd edition, 1956), Rene Wellek and Austin Warren observe that "man's pleasure in a literary work is compounded of the sense of novelty and the sense of recognition." What can help our students to recognize? In our teaching, most of us help our students discuss theme, character and plot, so that a course may be built on thematic relationships or patterns of content (*e.g.* tragedy) which can help students recognize similarities and differences between characters, between situations, and between ideas. But in doing so, we are dealing with language already processed by the students. Even the discussion of a poem which is focused on the language and structure of poetry, such as a treatment of Richard Wilbur's "To an American Poet Just Dead" as an extension and reshaping of classical elegy, deals with the ideas derived from the poet's language, not with the "black box" of unmeditated response to the surface structure of the language itself. To help our students achieve a "sense of

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recognition" means to help them create a model of a poetic form in their minds which functions in the same way that the model of language functions: it, too, is a system of rules connecting deep with surface structure. But it no more comprises "rules" like "A sonnet is a poem in iambic pentameter..." than language comprises rules like "A noun is a word which names...." Both of these statements are based on analysis of the linguistic product; they are not reflections of the linguistic process. I do not pretend to know the rules of "sonnetness" consciously, but I can suggest ways of helping students acquire them.

First, however else a course may be organized, we should read and study poems of identical structure for as long as possible. There are enough Shakespearean sonnets (not necessarily Shakespeare's alone), for example, in the literature to provide extensive variety in everything but form. When we point out metrical pattern, rhyme scheme, and content—form relationships, we are providing the kind of information we provide beginning readers: information which helps them learn, but *not the information they will use when they become fluent readers*, or fluent readers of sonnets. We are trying to give them the opportunity to construct for themselves the linguistic and formal rules of the sonnet so that they can read sonnets without analytic mediation. They must perceive generalities, make generalizations, test those generalizations using feedback from a sufficient quanity of language, and thus create and internalize part of the system of rules they will use as readers of poetry. The less variety of form they encounter at this point, and the more material they are able to use to provide feedback, the more surely the internal process will take place, and the more easily they will be able to assimilate other forms of poetry into the system.

Second, students should memorize at least one typical example of the form. Shakespeare's "That time of Year Thou Dost in Me Behold" (Sonnet 73) is an excellent choice, because the form is unvarying and the content-form relationship is strong and clear. The memorization must be thorough enough to provide the student with a context and a model for feedback when he reads another sonnet, thus helping him to establish the system of rules which will make him an effective, unmediating reader of sonnets—one who responds without formal analysis. We must remember that poetry is not part of the everyday language experience of our culture, so that we are forced to create artificially the conditions of everyday familiarity with its forms and patterns.

Third, we should have our students write sonnets. But since our aim has to do with the reading of poetry, we should not ask them to compete with Shakespeare or Frost; we should, rather, set conditions which will make the assignment merely formal, rather than "creative." This is an important point, since creative behavior needs to be nurtured because of the students' ego-involvement with the products of creativity. Therefore, the assignment should be limited to the fulfullment of the stanzaic requirements and the content-form relationship. But rhyme words may be found in a rhyming dictionary, syntax may be forced, logic may be stretched, ideas may be provided by the teacher. In this writing, the students will apply form, and internalize it further through that application. (As you may know, Maria Montessori taught reading through a rote writing process.)

Internally, the Shakespearan sonnet is a metaphoric form. Our fourth task is to help students respond to metaphoric language (in its many permutations as metaphor, simile, personification, etc.) in an immediate manner. But reading metaphoric language is a special kind of reading task; in general reading, we proceed immediately from the printed page to internalized meaning, while in metaphoric reading *the immediate response should be a signal that prevents an unmediated response.* The "normal" unpracticed response to poetic form is to ignore it, to get no meaning from it. The unpracticed response to metaphoric language is to process it immediately, as though it were ordinary language, a practice that leads to stock responses. When metaphors become part of everyday language, they become dead and go unnoticed: *nightfall, necklace, kneecap, flash in the pan.* In prose, the metaphor is read as just another way of saying something. In one of Saul Bellow's novels, we read, "Do you have emotions? Strangle them." In poetry, we would pause over the violence of the image, but in prose we probably respond to *strangle* not much differently than we would to *stifle* or *supress*. (The "we" is generic. We English teachers respond differently, but we are also conscious that we respond differently from most people to nuances in language.)

How can we help our students begin to notice in poetry what they have trained themselves to comprehend automatically in prose? It will do no more good to have students identify and classify metaphors, similes, symbols, and so forth, than to have younger students identify and classify blends and digraphs. Rather, we should stop over significant examples of metaphoric language and explore *meaning* in depth with our students, both convergently and divergently: What "time of year" is it? What relationships do the seasons have with human life? What about "that" time of year? What kind of autumnal images are used? What kind of life does that portend? What time of year are you in? What time of year am I in? What kinds of images would you use for you and me? What does the time of year as Shakespeare describes it mean to you? We should seek out metaphoric language that calls attention to itself: "Shall I compare thee...?" "My mistress' eyes are nothing like..." And always deal with meaning. Just as we learn to read by reading, we learn to process metaphor to meaning by doing so, but by doing so in depth and with deliberation. This activity will take considerable time, but it is an activity we normally linger over in teaching poetry anyway, and the time is necessary if our students are to benefit from their teacher's understanding of the oxymoron which serves as the credo for this paragraph: the immediate response should be a signal that prevents an unmediated response.

Our emphasis may then shift gradually to the Italian sonnet, whose form may be more difficult for students to internalize because of the six-line unit. But with the Shakespearean form providing the context, our approach to the Italian may follow John Ciardi's observation that a poem is composed of two voices speaking to each other across a silence. By this time, the form of the Shakespearean sonnet should supply a model for feedback, and the similarities *and differences* between the forms should strengthen the students' response to both. Although there is no need to have students learn finer distinctions, we should avoid including the Spenserian sonnet (abab bcbc cdcd ee) with the Shakespearean, and the Miltonic sonnet (an Italian sonnet without the turn between octave and sestet, and with a variety of rhyme schemes in the sestet) with the Italian. These forms may be introduced after the students' response to the sonnet form is internalized; it will be gratifying to see them adjust their responses to the linked quatrains of Spenser and the single voice in Milton.

For many students, familiarity with the sonnet will provide a system for connecting the stanzaic structure to deep structure in poetry in general. They will have responded internally to the quatrain, the couplet, various forms of sestet, the iambic line—the major English stanzaic forms, to which, for some students, we might need to add blank verse and the ballad stanza for extensive study. What still needs to be introduced are the ways in which forms may affect meaning to the extent of creating meaning. An obvious introduction would be forms which create such an effect even in the unsophisticated reader. I would suggest that the area of light verse is most suitable. The fact that we cannot imagine a limerick or a double dactylic dealing with a subject of high seriousness in an elevated tone demonstrates that we have internalized a connection between the surface element of form and the deep structure of meaning. Why could not Poe's "Raven" be written in a series of limerick stanzas?

> It was once on a midnight most dreary
> That I studied my books, weak and weary.
> As I started to nap
> I heard somebody rap
> On the door of my chamber most dreary.

Why do we respond in such a way that the sound-sense relationship becomes completely untenable? Why is nursery rhyme form impossible for serious poetry?

> Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
> How I wonder what you are.

And if the last question can be answered by an examination of metrics, what do we say about

> Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
> In the forests of the night...?

Clearly, we must look into the relationship between the reader and the poem, not merely at the poem itself.

When we read poetry, we may be responding differently to cues, and we may be responding to different cues, but the essential process is the same as in reading prose. We are reconstructing language. When we respond to prose, we respond connotatively as well as denotatively, sometimes conventionally, sometimes idiosyncratically. Certain elements in poetry trigger connotative responses as surely as do certain elements in ordinary language, and these responses are integrated into our system of rules. We respond without mediation. And once we accept the fact of unmediated response (built through familiarity, repetition, feedback), we must accept the premise that the language of poetry in all its facets is as conventional as language itself. We can analyze poetry to generalize about our responses, but it is fruitless to analyze poetry in an attempt to rationalize our responses.

But the tiger still burns brightly. Blake's poem is an illustration of the difference between using a set of cues which will generate an inappropriate response (my poor raven) and creating a tension between normally unmediated response and other elements of surface structure to create, in effect, a metaphor in which the vehicle is formal rather than lexical. Thus, Blake contrasts innocence and experience through his contrast between content and form. Like metaphor itself, such stanzaic metaphor requires that we respond to the cues which signal us to suspend our unmediated response.

APOLOGIA PRO VITAE MEA

"Notice to all candidates: Any item in your CV that is not immediately clear should be explained."

Two articles and a note,
the last a survey of
active verbs in *The Relic*,
are under consideration.
(To be explicit, the note
is at *N & Q*; the articles,
in progress.) The thesis,
on the phylogeny of Vaughan's
poetic worlds, is being read
by a noted scholar (name withheld
upon request) in the field.
A positive response is
every day expected.

Future plans include
a monograph on Shakespeare
as a model for new courses
in rhetoric and advanced comp.
Details available on request.

Robert Willson

Robert Willson teaches courses in Shakespeare and literary criticism at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

There is yet another area in which the reader must respond to cues which prevent unmediated response. We must, reading any material, apprehend tone. The fluent reader will process signals automatically unless there is the conflict of cues so characteristic of poetry: the conflict which signals irony. Most English teachers have experienced real student resistance to the very idea of irony (as opposed to ritual resistance to poetry *per se*) because irony seems to confirm the students' suspicion that a poem is supposed to mean something it doesn't say. But it is our job to help our students see that irony is a way of saying, and that the reader is responding to language, not to mystic revelation, when he responds to irony. In order to do so, we must exert care in our selection of materials, establishing student responses based on cues the students are able to perceive, as in *e.g.* Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess" and "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" in which the irony lies in the tension between what the speakers think of themselves and what they reveal of themselves. The students will be alerted to irony in their own reading through their development of (1) assent to the proposition that irony exists and can be communicated and apprehended, (2) comprehension of irony when it is pointed out, and finally (3) the integration of cues that signal irony into their own system of rules. Again, the key to success in this area is the repetition of generalizable patterns so that the process of discovering patterns and testing generalizations through feedback can take place. Our goal is our students' development of unmediated responses that will enable them to function as they do with metaphor: the immediate response should lead to a considered response. Without this ability, would a reader of Robert Frost or Emily Dickinson or Edgar Lee Masters ever pause to consider meanings below the surface of poems in which the linguistic cues that signal irony are present but far from obvious?

The application of a few basic findings of psycholinguistics has led to a pattern of possible approaches to helping students become fluent readers of poetry. They must master stanzaic forms to the level of internalization which permits reading those forms effectively without analytic mediation; and they must master language to the level of internalization which permits an immediate response different from their immediate response to prose. The pattern can easily be extended in both scope and depth, and imposes little that is foreign to any personal teaching style: only that poems of identical structure be studied extensively. The other elements—internalizing form, responding to metaphor immediately, and connecting surface structure to deep structure in poetry—may be taught alongside of whatever approaches to poetry individual teachers have found most rewarding.■

the English Record

Call for Manuscripts

Fall 1977:
The Literature of New York

We are looking for essays on works of literature which are: 1) set in New York (city or state), or 2) written by a New York author, or 3) otherwise concerned in an important way with New York. Essayists should take as their subjects works that they think could or should be taught (any level); the essay need not, however, be directly concerned with teaching the work. Deadline: July 15, 1977.

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We would like to see papers on the following topics: 1) works by/about women that can/should be taught; 2) women's language—what is it? how is it important to the classroom teacher?; 3) do we need to (read have to) have boys' books and girls' books?; and 4) classroom activities or units concerned with sexism. We hope to see manuscripts concerned with all levels. Deadline: December 15, 1977.

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Optimum length for the **English Record** is 2500 to 3000 words; however, shorter and longer pieces will be considered. All manuscripts should be sent to the editors, English Department, State University College, Geneseo, New York 14454. Please include a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage for return clipped to it.

Millstones

An Approach to the *Miller's Tale* and the *Reeve's Tale*

Ronald B. Herzman

My pilgrimage to Chaucerian wisdom has not been without some "wandrynge by the weye." In graduate school, my mentor, the late A.R. Dunlap, was himself a student of George Lyman Kittridge, Karl Young, Robert Menner, and Edward Sapir. If an unsolvable crux should come up in *Beowulf* or Chaucer, he could turn his text sideways, look at his notes, and solve the problem definitively by telling us what Kittridge said. By temperament even more than by training he seemed to be more austere than even that eminent company could wish, to such as extent that we would feel more than a slight moral victory in Chaucer seminar if we could pressure him to admit, for example, that the word "taille," "tail," in the *Shipman's Tale* really was a double entendre. We would glow with triumph as he gave his ultimate assent: "That reading might be allowable."[1]

So when I was about to teach the *Miller's Tale* for the first time, in a survey course my last year of graduate school, it was not to him but to a younger medievalist that I went for advice, confident that he at least would not participate in a Victorian conspiracy to hide the true nature of Chaucer. (A conspiracy given its most explicit expression, I might add, in John Matthews Manly's bowdlerized student edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, in whose notes we are told: "The *Miller's Tale* is not fit to be read in mixed company, but the portraits of the Oxford student, the carpenter's wife, and the parish clerk are examples of Chaucer's latest and best method of portraiture. They are therefore included in our selections."[2] Or again, for the *Reeve's Tale*, the terse line: "A specimen of the tale will suffice."[3])

The advice I received, in any case, was "the tale sells itself; all you have to do is read it." Like all conspiracies, however, this ran deeper than first imagined. A pause was followed by "of course, taking care to omit all the really raw parts." Now if I have learned anything since in my pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem of Chaucerian wisdom, it is that although nothing quite "sells itself" to students, the "really raw" parts come as close as one can ever hope to get. This is a deceptive insight, however, because it is one which works too well: it could actually deceive one into thinking that he had reached the heavenly Jerusalem. It has taken me quite a while to realize that this step is not an end in itself but only a means to an end. To put it in more general terms, to make my pilgrimage into our common pilgrimage as critics and teachers of Chaucer, our job in the classroom can never be less than making our students laugh, but it must also be something more; we must find ways to be articulate in fitting this humor within the larger contexts of Chaucer's pilgrimage in particular and medieval aesthetics in general, so that the humor can be seen in delicate balance with the high seriousness of Chaucer's larger purposes. In teaching especially, this is no easy task. This mixture is something that the best recent criticism has been intensely concerned with: Derek Brewer perfectly expresses the ideal when he tells us that Chaucer is never more serious than when he is being his most funny.[4] But it is not a combination which comes easily in the classroom. To talk about humor, very often, is to kill it. If it is killed in a scholarly article—well, that has happened before.

I would like to suggest that a series of juxtapositions from the visual arts can make an effective statement for students of the way in which humorous elements are to be understood, clearer perhaps than any purely verbal explanation. My first example is from the Cathedral of Bourges, showing a corbel decorated by a head. In an analogous position, in the same cathedral, as my students perceive—not immediately but after a few seconds and many thoughtful and serious glances exchanged with one another—the decoration is a pair of buttocks. That this juxtaposition takes place in a church is in itself an effective beginning, for it suggests that the viewer must never forget that both elements must ultimately be seen in their relation to a larger ideal. The opposition of heads and tails presents an ideal and its inversion, which a slight amount of verbalizing can explain to the class: the seat of the rational faculty should govern. The seat itself can only do well when it is taking, not giving orders. The *Miller's Tale* is what happens, simply, when the ruling is done by the tail rather than by the head. This image allows one to "see" just how much of the *Miller's Tale* zeroes in on these regions, with all manner of wonderfully executed pokings, fartings, and var-

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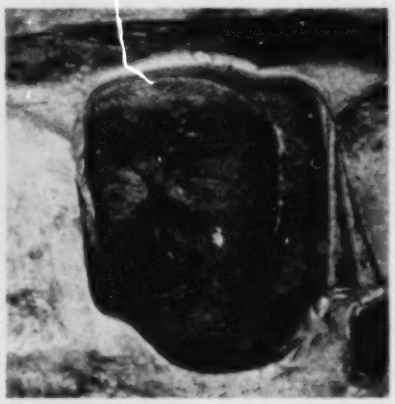
ious other nether "melodies," all coming together in single focus. At the same time it allows us to see how this single focus must be understood in terms of the larger structure, the ideal pilgrimage of which it is a part.

The second example, a manuscript illumination showing hell as a mirror of heaven, again suggests how an inversion can only be fully understood by reference to the ideal. The damned souls about to be placed in the cauldron can only be fully appreciated as an inverted image of the bosom of Abraham. The movement of all the creatures in hell—souls and devils—can only be appreciated in terms of the peace of heaven. Analyzing Chaucer's fabliaux consists of a process similar to looking at such an image. What is given in the fabliaux, in straightforward and obvious ways, is the inversion, a world turned upside down. But the ideal is also implied and expressed, either within the poem itself or in the larger context of which the poem is a part, and the teacher-critic has the task of bringing this relationship before Chaucer's readers and then letting it speak for itself.

One such image is worthy of explication in detail.

Differences between the *Reeve's Tale* and the *Miller's Tale* are often perceived in terms of "sharpness of tone," which in turn is usually explained by the single-minded interest in revenge which consumes the Reeve. In his introduction the Reeve reacts violently to age, his own, and the parallel he perceives with John the Carpenter's in the *Miller's Tale*—for it was John's age, in combination with other qualities to be sure, which set him up as such a total dupe. The Reeve, in his fixation on age, nurses and caresses his rage into readiness as he prepares for his own tale of revenge. One element in this characterization has not been given sufficient attention, however. In his catalogue of the qualities which characterize old age, the Reeve makes several connections which do not logically (or more accurately, chronologically) follow. He calls attention to lust, for one example, and then proceeds to connect increased desire with age, and while some of Chaucer's older pilgrims might give hearty approval to the connection—Alisoun of Bath for one—it hardly fits such exemplars of age as the Knight or the Parson. This same inconsistency is true for the four so-called "gleedes" that belong to age: "Avaunting, lying,



"The opposition of heads and tails presents an ideal and its inversion. . . . The seat of the rational faculty should govern. The seat itself can only do well when it is taking, not giving orders." Corbels from the Cathedral of Bourges (ca. 1240).

anger, coveitise" (3884). Once again, the Reeve makes clear that these are not his individual faults, but that they belong rather to age generally. And once again they would hardly hold up as descriptions of the Knight or the Parson. Perhaps the Reeve's blindness is such that he enjoys the assumption that his entire generation shares faults which are uniquely his. But such blindness is the Reeve's, for there is no necessary chronological connection.

These are qualities which do belong in a precise and definitive way to one important sense in which oldness was understood in the Middle Ages, however. They are all attributes of the Pauline "Old Man." For Paul and the tradition which follows him, oldness was not primarily a matter of chronology but of interior disposition. The old man was one who had not put on Christ, a man who lived according to the flesh rather than the spirit, a man who, in Augustine's terms, belonged to the City of Man rather than the City of God. Once seen from this perspective, the four "gleedes" come immediately into sharper focus. Moreover, this is also an advantageous perspective from which to view the relationship between teller and tale. These same Pauline dichotomies which define the Reeve's "oldness" are an implicit statement of the ideal and its inversion against which the subject of the tale itself can be measured. As the Reeve's world is upside down, so is the tale itself. The drunkenness and swyvenings which are the concerns of the tale are precisely the attributes of Pauline oldness spoken of in a text such as Romans 13:10.

In addition to the link between teller and tale, a link can also be forged to the larger concerns of the *Canterbury Tales* as well, to the idea of pilgrimage. In interpreting Paul for the Middle Ages, Augustine, in the *City of God*, sees variations on the same fundamental Pauline dichotomy governing areas of experience which today would be classified in altogether different categories: history, psychology, morality. In the central metaphor of the work, Augustine borrows the language of Roman political theory to describe man's pilgrimage to the *City of God*: we are all either citizens of the earthly city, accepting only what that city has to offer, or we are citizens of the heavenly city, and hence pilgrims attempting to progress to our final home in the heavenly Jerusalem. In examining the implications of this dichotomy from several interrelated perspectives, he explains that the macrocosm of man in general in his relation to the state

"The figure at the top is Moses; he places the corn, the grain of the Old Testament in the mill, and Paul, at the other end harvests the flour of the new." Capital, Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Vezelay (12th cen.)

is fundamentally a reflection of the microcosm of each individual man; the dichotomy of the two cities, the City of Man or the City of God, is analogous to the dichotomy between flesh and spirit warring within each man. In other words, Augustine makes explicit the connection between flesh and spirit, old and new, which I suggest is operating within the tale. Whether you live as an old man or a new man, whether you live according to the flesh or the spirit, defines whether your life is a true or a false pilgrimage.[5]

These considerations are the necessary preliminary to the thematically most relevant sense in which the idea of the Pauline old man operates in the tale: through its linkage with the central image of the tale—that of the mill. When the Reeve begins the tale: "At Trumpyntoun nat fer fro Cantebrigge,/ Ther gooth a brook, and over that a brigge,/ Upon the whiche b[r]ook ther stant a melle:/ And this is verray sooth that I yow telle" (3921-4), he opens out, on a thematic level, more of the tale than has previously been suspected. In one obvious way—as the locus of the action—the mill is the central image of the poem. The clerks come to the mill. The meal is ground at the mill. Because Symkin knows more than they do about the working of the mill, they are duped at and through the mill. And the clerks have their revenge by staying at the mill. Less obviously, but more interestingly, the literal machinery of the mill, its structure and working, provides an analogy with another kind of "grinding" which takes place in the tale. In an accurate and perceptive article, Ian Lancashire has shown how, through an intricate set of puns on such words as "flour," "ending," "pecking," and of course "grinding," and through the equation of the machinery of the mill with the sexual organs—a literary commonplace both before and after Chaucer—the tale develops a consistent pattern of double entendre in which Symkin, losing the "gryndynge of the whete" (4313), becomes "the perfect victim of retributive justice, which deals out an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, measure for measure."[6]

To both these levels of the mill operating within the tale I propose a third, one which encompasses the other two and gives to them additional resonances: the icon of the so-called mystic mill. The twelfth-century capital from the church of St. Mary Magdalene at Vezelay is perhaps the most well known version of this icon. Its meaning was rediscovered in the long and fruitful battle still being fought to win back meaning in Christian Art lost since the enlightenment, a discovery helped in great part by the work of Emile Mâle.[7] From the interpretation of the figures in terms of a simple genre scene—a realistic depiction of the grinding of meal (making due allowances for Romanesque exaggeration), we have moved to a typological understanding of the scene: the figure at the top is Moses; he places the corn, the grain of the Old Testament in the mill, and Paul, at the other end, harvests the flour of the new. The relationship of corn to flour, then, is the relationship of old to new. Thus the image, which is

in fact a typological variant of an allegorical use of mills which can be found in monastic theology as early as the *Conferences* of John Cassian, wherein the mill and its grinding refers to the soul in the process of trying to find Divine truth, is an extremely forceful visual representation of the relationship between Pauline oldness and newness, letter and spirit.[2]

The meaning of the mystic mill thus links together the major thematic concerns of the tale. It links the Pauline oldness of the Reeve's introduction to all the subsequent action of the tale itself with conciseness and immediacy. The sexual innuendo and double entendres of mill and grinding are etched in even higher relief when the mystic mill is seen as an invisible but present ideal. When Symkin the miller, in speaking of his plan to dupe the clerks, says that "In stide of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren" (4053), he is also precisely expressing the way in which the tale itself takes the ideal and turns it upside down. The grinding becomes in fact a grim but outrageously funny parody of this ideal in much the same way that the Friars in the buttocks of the devil are a parody of the icon of the virgin of mercy in the beginning of the *Summoner's Tale*, in the same way that the dividing of the fart at the end of the *Summoner's Tale* is a parody of Pentecost, in the same way that the ideal love of the *Song of Songs* is powerfully evoked in the less than ideal love of the *Miller's Tale* and the *Merchant's Tale*.

Taken all together, what this implies for the study of Chaucer's fabliaux is something like the following: Robert Hollander, in a recent study of the *Divine Comedy*, mentions in passing that there is another great writer of a Divine Comedy in the fourteenth century, and that is Chaucer.[3] This is an assertion, I believe, which should be taken as more than pious critical metaphor, for if we look closely, we can find much in the *Tales* to support this statement. Undoubtedly, what has kept us from looking harder in the past is that Chaucer has chosen merry middle earth as the stage for his pilgrimage, rather than the depths and heights of Dante's afterlife. But in the fabliaux, as comedy gets broader and broader, the chaos of disorder of Dante's hell is evoked. (The only literary characters who fart as much as Chaucer's Churls are Dante's Devils.) More important, traces of the Paradise which Chaucer never gives us in so direct or organized or stunning a fashion as Dante does, are evoked, and are beginning to be perceived, by the systematic presence of image after image leading us to the ideal. ■

"The damned souls about to be placed in the cauldron can only be fully appreciated as an inverted image of the bosom of Abraham." Psalter of St. Louis and Blanche of Castile (1223-1230).

NOTES

1 To balance a distortion made for obvious rhetorical purposes, I would like to acknowledge my considerable debt both to the late Professor A. R. Dunlap and to Professor W.B. Finnie of the University of Delaware for their scholarly example, their patience, and their considerable encouragement to me when I was a graduate student. I would also like to thank my colleague Professor William R. Cook for the slides used in this presentation.

2 *Canterbury Tales* (London: Harap and Co., n. d.), p. 559.

3 Ibid., p. 561.

(Please turn to page 26)

The WESTERN in Literature and Film

Charles R. Duke

Prime time on televison belongs to the docs and the cops. The last old-time western action adventure story has disappeared from television, and the American, raised on The Lone Ranger, Hopalong Cassidy, and Gene Autry, feels a bit of a loss. The love affair of the American with the western, both in fiction and film, has not been long, but it has been strong.

The term "western," however, causes some confusion in people's minds. To some individuals it simply means all fiction written about the West beyond the Mississippi River. However, that definition is inadequate, for it puts together such distinctly different writers as Zane Grey, John Steinbeck, Hamlin Garland, Ernest Haycox and Paul Horgan. It is better, perhaps, to draw a distinction between Westerns which are a distinct genre and western novels. Such a distinction makes it possible for us to put on one side writers such as Zane Grey, Max Brand, Luke Short, and Ernest Haycox whose fictions have basically similar ingredients: action, romance, conflict, and clearly drawn good and bad characters; plots are predictive and the good man always wins. On the other side we can find such writers as Ken Kesey, Wright Morris, Richard Brautigan, and Larry McMurtry whose fictions have plots that rarely are predictable and which seldom use all the ingredients of the Western as developed by Grey and others. Hence we have the true Western which follows a fairly set formula, and we have the novel with a western setting. It is with the former that we are most concerned.

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One of the obvious reasons for the popularity of the Western is that it is an adventure story with the emphasis placed upon action and romance. Characters in the Western are strictly controlled and essentially flat in characterization. Very few Western writers are interested in analyzing or in questioning accepted standards of morality; in fact, most of their characters conform to middle class standards. All of this leads us to label the Western, in Marshall McLuhan's terms, a "hot" medium which offers the maximum entertainment with the minimum of involvement. Another way of summarizing the Western is through its narrative structure. The Western is like a game in which the good man is pitted against the bad man on a field of competition which is both definable and predictable. The game is played under a set of rules that are clear to all those involved, including the reader.

According to I.C. Jarvie, Westerns generally fall into one of five rather roughly defined categories:[1]

1. *Stories of the Pioneers:*
   These treat the hunters and trappers who explored the West, the wagon travelers who tried to cross it, and the cattlemen who ranched it. The themes tend to focus on man versus nature, showing natural hardships such as the country and the marauding Indians.
2. *Opening Up of the Frontier:*
   These are the stories of the stage coach, the Pony Express, the building of the railroads, and the conflicts among the squatters, the sharecroppers, and the cattlemen; the professional gunman makes his appearance at this stage as well.
3. *The Coming of the Law:*
   The stories center on the differences between states and territories, the problems of marshals, the desire of towns to become respectable, the role of the vigilantes, the bounty hunters, and the cattle drives to market.
4. *The Law in Action:*
   Here the concern is more with the legal and moral problems of the West than with the physical and economic ones. One common theme has been the good and bad gunmen and how they were played off against each other.
5. *The Psychological Western:*
   No time period can be attached to this form other than it appeared only after World War II; apart from the rather straightforward treatment of neurotic heroes or villans, there were also those concerned with the psychology of the characters.

Although Jarvie intends these categories to describe the western film, they work equally well in distinguishing many of the types of written Westerns.

Rise of the Western

The Western has not been with us long. Some authorities suggest that it might have its origins in the epics and in the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson, but

more likely, the Western was the natural product of several cultural and social developments in American history, beginning about 1900.

One of the principal reasons for the rise of the Western at this time was the suspicion that the West, a land associated with freedom, space and opportunity, was disappearing due to the rapid expansion of the country and because of the increasing interest in technology. This concern for the past and its history as well as the desire to preserve some of it becomes clearer when we note that one of the consistent best sellers in the early 1900's was historical fiction.

A fear also existed at this time that industrialization was swallowing people's lives. In attempts to recapture a past that was less restricting and domineering, people turned to the West. Hence, for many the West became more than just a satisfactory symbol of American heritage; it became an emotionally attractive experience and the Western became a literary by-product of this experience. These same feelings are present today and continue to help explain people's interest in the Western.

A number of individuals helped to bring the Western into the mainstream of popular reading, but one individual can be singled out as actually fostering the form in America. Owen Wister saw the West as the appropriate place for showing the greatness of America. Wister's vision of the West encouraged individualism, democracy and freedom; he wished to weed out the undesirable elements—the Indians and the immigrants—and show only the courage and strength of the Anglo-Saxon. As a result, Wister helped to bring together the cultural currents of the period and blended them into a model for a new type of literature. Essentially all of Wister's work for the Western went into his one example of the type, *The Virginian*, in which Wister played upon the interest in things uniquely western. He wrote what he called a historical novel but used the new and popular figure of the cowboy as his democratic hero. He arranged these elements so successfully that he paved the way for hundreds of similar Westerns, although he himself never wrote another one.

If Wister was the beginner of the Western formula, Zane Grey certainly deserves the title of systematizer. If Wister never chose to repeat the formula of *The Virginian*, Grey had no compunctions about using it over and over again. Since it was successful, he never saw any reason to change it or experiment with it. To us today, Grey's Westerns may seem prosaic and not at all unusual; to his reading public, they were the sure antidote for much of what was going on around them which they wished to forget.

Zane Grey was responsible for bringing many Westerns into the market, but Max Brand was even more prolific. Brand was superior to Grey in style, characterization and plot, but he still had his weaknesses. One of the most noticeable was his inability to let his characters remain human beings. A Brand hero was not merely heroic; he was gigantic and took on mythical, superhuman traits.

Max Brand published most of his work in *Western Story*, a pulp magazine that helped to stylize the genre during the early 1900's; this stylizing took the form of predictable plots, stereotyped characters, and avoidance of sex and unhappy endings. By the end of the 1920's, the term "western" could be used to describe a specific kind of popular literature. Gone were the specifics of western regional or local color fiction, for writers had accepted a design that employed romance, adventure and action. This gradual process, often called "denaturalization," demanded that a writer repress his individual style in favor of the recognizable desires of editors and readers. Strict adherence to, or the skillful manipulation of, the formula became more important than a writer's individual achievements.

In the late 1920's and through World War II, however, some changes in the Western occurred. Ernest Haycox best typifies these shifts. Haycox had grown tired of the restrictions imposed on writers by *Western Story* and other pulp magazines, for he wanted to introduce some innovations to the formula. He began by sending some of his work to *Frontier*, a competing magazine which seemed sympathetic to his ideas. His efforts were received well and began to make some impression upon other writers.

Haycox's innovations were not startling, but they did help to stretch the boundaries of the genre. One of his innovations was to use two heroines instead of one. This added some needed tension to the plot and allowed the hero to be bothered with some internal conflicts as well as external ones. The stiff division between good and bad was avoided because both heroines had good qualities; it was only after time and experience that the hero came to determine which girl had the "real goodness."

Another of Haycox's innovations cut deeper into the usual pattern of the Western. Traditionally the pulp Western hero was a doer, an actor with little time for reflection. Haycox tried to inject a broader meaning for his hero, to allow him to think about the circumstances in which he found himself. This rough attempt at introducing a Hamlet figure to the genre was not well received at first because the reading public was conditioned to expect action in its Westerns. Haycox's solution to this problem was to let the hero develop his understanding gradually—to act hastily at first and then to realize that his actions had to be more orderly. Sometimes this learning came from the hero's involvement with the two heroines, but more often it came from the mistakes made while trying to analyze his behavior. These "lessons" were always tied into subsequent actions, the answers being acted out so that the rapidly moving action would keep the arm-chair riders contented.

Still another direction for the Western came from Haycox's experimentation with the historical Western. He felt that if he based his Westerns on solid, historical information, he would be adding to the realism of his work. These efforts began with *Trouble-*

shooter (1937), a Western based on the building of the Union Pacific Railroad, and ended with *Bugles in the Afternoon* (1945), an account of Custer's last stand.

The overall contribution of Haycox to the Western form is somewhat difficult to determine in spite of these innovations. Some writers cite the "feel" he had for characters and setting; others point to his style and still others point out that he was the one to lift the Western from the pulps to the slicks such as *Colliers* and *The Saturday Evening Post*. Whatever the contribution, one thing is certain: Haycox helped to point the way for changing the formula while retaining the interest of the reading public.

World War II hit the pulp magazines hard, and most of the pulp Westerns went out of business. This meant that the market was severely diminished, and many Western writers found it difficult to survive. In 1950, however, the Western Writers of America was formed to provide a marketplace and a meeting place for Westerns and Western writers. The organization encouraged the improved writing of Westerns; it even gave "Ernies" (named after Ernest Haycox) for the best western writers of the year. Now called "Spurs," the awards include recognition of best Western, best non-fiction on the West, best Western short, and best Western children's book.

Luke Short was one of the struggling Western writers at the time when Ernest Haycox was popular. Short was a very poor imitation of Haycox, but he eventually became good enough to receive contracts with publishing houses and ultimately more than forty percent of his Westerns appeared under the Bantam trademark. He quickly became the most popular Western writer after Haycox.

Short's Westerns were a blend of romance, action, and conflict of character. His later Westerns of the 1960's tended to carry more brute violence and arguments that brute force was needed to keep law and order than did his early works. Short became quite successful at mixing elements of the Western and the detective story, the combination giving his Westerns an unusual amount of suspense and tension.

Luke Short knew the details of western life, but his works were not really historical. Instead, he chose to stress general information about such western topics as mining, ranching, railroading, and farming. His books were short—150 pages—and seldom bothered with the internal conflicts of characters. Still, it was his convincing portrayal of character conflict on an external level, his feel for western settings, and his skillful use of believable western plots which made him one of the most successful Western writers of all time.

At present the lucrative field of script-writing for movies and television has attracted the modern Western writer. No market for the short story Western exists and the serial markets so popular in the early 1900's have disappeared. Some modern Westerns have moved into what previously were taboo areas: sex, drugs, and racism. The western novelists, however, are the ones who seem to be making the best use of the possibilities of the Western genre. Works such as *Little Big Man, Cat Ballou,* and *Butch Cassidy and the Sun Dance Kid* suggest that the modern novelist is using the popular anti-hero and elements of the conventional Western, but this time carrying them to such extremes that they result in creating an anti-Western.

Although the Western may have disappeared from the television screen and is less popular at the movies, its elements of action, romance, and western setting still make it a favorite on the newsstands and thus it is highly unlikely that we will see the complete demise of the Western.

Why Teach the Western

Critics of the literature used in secondary school classrooms often object to the strong language, to the portrayals of sex and the questionable characterization given to respected individuals such as teachers, doctors, policemen and others. Surprisingly, few people have turned to the Western as a possible antidote. Most of the early Westerns are quite restrained in language, tend to avoid any suggestion of sex, and, for the most part, emphasize strong action with a healthy dose of physical fitness tossed in for good measure. The codes are clear, the dilemmas relatively easy to solve and the endings usually quite affirmative.

All of these elements might be used as an argument for the presence of the Western in the classroom. Actually, far better reasons than these exist. First is the importance of popular literature in any study of a country's literature. For too long we have overlooked the fact that much can be learned about a country, its customs, its views of itself, and its people through a study of its popular literature. The Western reveals much about the attitudes of the early 1900's, not so much in terms of historical accuracy—there was not too much of that—but simply because there were elements in the Western which people of that time felt they needed.

The Western can also be read as basically myth or fable. The material of the fable is based upon history, but the purpose of the fable is not the realistic explanation of a "colorful chapter in America's past." Instead, in the Western we have a metaphorical attempt to face the inconsistencies and contradictions which are an integral part of American life. By examining these attempts and by studying the values exhibited in the Western, the student of today can gain a perspective on his own values; contrasting the simplistic code of right and wrong found in the Western with his own confusing moral dilemmas, the student has an opportunity to reflect on his own behavior and some of the elements which may have contributed to his present state.

Initially, perhaps, students (and adults) are tempted to ridicule the Western. By studying its development in film and literature, however, they can begin to see the role of formulas in fiction and film, the strengths and weaknesses of popular literature and film and develop a more critical per-

spective about viewing and reading. And along the way comes a bit more understanding about the uniqueness of the American experience and the role which the West had in contributing to that experience.

Westerns offer few problems as reading material for adolescents. Although some of the language may seem somewhat stilted, even archaic, the tight structure and the emphasis upon action will capture the attention of many reluctant readers. The Western provides a simple, yet direct way of introducing students to myth and how it develops in society. Balancing the facts of the West against the fiction of the West, students begin to see the place that reality and romance may have in fiction and film. The purposes such combinations serve in society also can be explored with considerable benefit for the student. The Western, then, is a logical selection to study as both a reflector and a creator of social attitudes.

Organizing the Study of Westerns

A number of possible approaches to the Western exist; a teacher might choose to use Jarvie's categories, mentioned earlier in this article. Another approach is to use the following topics as focusing points in a course dealing with westerns in literature and film.

A. What Is the Real West?
   An examination of some facts about the West and a look at what modern readers and viewers think about the West.
B. What Is the Western Story?
   An introduction to the various types of western fiction with some attention paid to the development of the western as a literary and a film form.
C. The Silent Western and the Radio Western
   An opportunity to view and discuss some of the earliest attempts at putting the western on film; an opportunity to listen and discuss some of the earliest radio westerns.
D. Myth in the Western
   An examination of the various ways that the Western has contributed to the development of certain myths about the West and its heroes.
E. The Television Western and the Western as Humor
   An opportunity to study various television programs which claim they are "westerns"; also an opportunity to view and discuss the western as satire.
F. Reality and Myth Joined
   An exploration of how both reality and myth can work together to produce effective literary and film experiences in the western.

Reading the Western

Along with class readings—a good text for this purpose is Philip Durham and Everett L. Jones, eds. *The Western Story, Fact, Fiction and Myth* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975)—students should be encouraged to read widely in the western. One useful way to organize such reading is to group representative types of westerns, shown on this page. All selections are readily available in inexpensive paperback format.

Beating Film Costs

No study of the Western would be complete without viewing representative western films. However, budgets being what they are, many teachers find it difficult to procure money for film rentals. Although most distributors have ample listings of westerns, renting them can quickly become an expensive proposition. Not too many alternatives exist, but if money is a definite factor in securing films, consideration should be given to the use of 8mm. films or extracts of 16mm. films. Most of the available 8mm. films must

TYPES OF THE WESTERN

Roots of the Western

James Fenimore Cooper ..... *The Prairie, The Pioneers, The Deerslayer*
Zane Grey ..... *The Last Plainsman, The U. P. Trail, The Call of the Canyon*
Bret Harte ..... *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Tales*
James K. Paulding ..... *Westward Ho*
Mark Twain ..... *Roughing It*
Owen Wister ..... *The Virginian*

The Emerging Western

Max Brand ..... *Destry Rides Again, Singin' Guns*
Clay Fisher ..... *The Big Pasture, The Red Blizzard*
Ernest Haycox ..... *Riders West, Rim of the Desert, Trail Smoke, Bugles in the Afternoon*
Will Henry ..... *No Survivors*
Luke Short ..... *Trouble Country, War on the Cimarron, Ramrod, Coroner Creek, Rimrock*

The "Modern" Western

Walter Van Tilburg Clark ..... *The Ox-Bow Incident*
Marilyn Durham ..... *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*
A. B. Guthrie ..... *The Way West, The Big Sky*
William Dale Jennings ..... *The Cowboys*
Louis L'Amour ..... *Chancy, The Man from Skibbereen*
Allistair MacLean ..... *Breakheart Pass*
Frederic Manfred ..... *Riders of Judgment*
Charles Portis ..... *True Grit*
Jack Schaefer ..... *Shane*
Glendon Swarthout ..... *The Shootist*
Rob Thompson ..... *Hearts of the West*
Jessamyn West ..... *Massacre Creek*
Burton Wohl ..... *Posse*

be purchased outright, but their cost is reasonable, usually ranging from seven to thirty dollars. If they are used over a period of time, the investment can be justified.

Cinema Eight, Division of Cinema Concepts, Inc., Chester, Conn., has a wide range of offerings in the western, available in either 8mm. or Super 8; some of the stars of these films include Ken Maynard, Tom Mix, Tex Ritter, Randolph Scott, John Wayne and James Stewart. Another source for shortened versions of westerns is Gaines 16 Films Co., 15207 Stagg Street, VanNuys, CA. They will send a catalogue upon request.

Another possibility for beating film costs is to use film extract packages. Films, Inc. (many regional offices) offers a package called "The Western Film" which focuses on the time of the gunfighter and the lawless elements of the West. The package consists of a 14 minute black and white extract from *My Darling Clementine* and a 15 minute film extract from *The Gunfighter*. The package also includes a cassette lecture which features an authority on the western discussing its characteristics. A special film genre study guide also comes with the materials. The rental price for the package is $40. Such extracts provide a possible substitute for having a large number of expensive feature films. They allow the teacher to focus on such things as the conventional elements of the film western like plot, characters and archetypes. The extract also can be used to complement feature films, serving as a stimulus to remind students of issues treated in previously viewed films; comparisons and contrasts among extracts are a possibility as well.

Radio and Television Westerns

Students should be aware that the radio western was as popular as, if not more popular than, the film western. Although the western does not appear on radio today, a number of the old western shows have been preserved either on record or tape and are easily obtained. Two companies who offer programs such as The Lone Ranger, Death Valley Days, Hopalong Cassidy, and Straight Arrow will provide catalogs upon request: Mark 56 Records, Box 1, Anaheim, CA; Mar-Bren Sound Co., 420 Pelham Rd., Rochester, N.Y.

The western as regular programming seems to have gone into decline on television; however, many local stations are still offering re-runs of "Gunsmoke," "The Lone Ranger," and other favorites. The teacher's best procedure is to attempt to video-tape one or two selections and bring them to class unless students have ready access to stations offering the re-runs. Care should be taken to obtain permission from the station before video-taping.

A Final Note

It should be obvious that many approaches exist for studying the western: historical, thematic or specific type—outlaw, Indian, army. The best procedure is to explore the resources available and then determine the most appropriate structure. If a complete course devoted to the Western is not feasible[2], some time might be spent in historical survey courses exploring the Western and its role in American literature. Even just adding one Western to the reading list of an American literature course will be a positive step toward making students more aware of this unique literary form that has enjoyed considerable popularity and, if present sales records are any indication, still retains a faithful following.■

Notes

[1]"The Western and the Gangster Film," in *Towards a Sociology of the Cinema* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 160-61.

[2]The author will provide interested readers with a copy of "The Western in Film and Literature, an Elective Course" which describes an 18 week course in the western suitable for secondary or college students; materials include listings of films, activities, and teacher bibliography; send a self-addressed, stamped (50¢) 8½ by 11 manila envelope to Dr. Charles R. Duke, Department of English, Plymouth State College, Plymouth, N.H. 03264.

MILLSTONES *(From page 21)*

4 *Chaucer and Chaucerians* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1966), p. 249.

5 *City of God*, Book IV, passim.

6 "Sexual Innuendo in *The Reeve's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 6 (1972), 167.

7 *L'art religieux du XIIe siecle en France* (Paris: Librarie Armand Colin, 1922), pp. 166-8. This fundamentally important volume is about to appear in an English translation published in the Bollingen Series. Also see Abbot Suger's discussion of the icon in *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis and Its Art Treasures*, ed. and trans. Erwin Panofsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946). Suger's description of the Mystic Mill as it appears in the windows of Chartres has provided modern writers such as Male the key for understanding the image.

8 *Conferences* in *Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, second series (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdman, rpt. 1952), p. 303.

9 *Allegory in Dante's Commedia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 53.

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PLAY WITH ME

"Play with me,
I have a yard."
She called
clutched at
white picket
swinging gate.
"I have slides
and swings too."
But the schoolbound
flees to class
and imaginary friends
console little.
Growing to three
takes the full year.
Lonely child
in an old
unmortgaged neighborhood.
Cottages with hedges
or white picket fences
are someone else's
dream.

R.H. Sherman

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TRANSCENDING FASHION:

What is Basic in the Humanities

Carl Ladensack

The title of this essay is deliberately intended to be ambiguous. Like the poets I believe in the value of ambiguity as a way of simultaneously suggesting several ideas that are pertinent. It's the poet's equivalent to the painter's "laconic line" and should produce some of the same delight as one discovers two objects defined by one line. Whether it is used as a verb or a verbal, *transcending* is an appropriate term to show the value of the humanities movement. First, I wish to suggest that the study of humanities is not merely a fashion, a fad that will pass as do so many other educational innovations. Humanities courses go beyond fashion. Next, I want to acknowledge that humanities has been a fashion during the last decade, but that what made it stylish for a while was really the ultimate fashion, that which transcends all others. My intent here is to try to show some of the basic goals of a humanities course and to show that these goals have long been sought by good English teachers. Lately, they have simply had a little help from their friends in allied disciplines.

One of the issues we as teachers must confront is the need to decide what is basic. Certainly by many definitions a knowledge of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc., is what we mean by basics. The public, however, does not even reach that level; they think that spelling and handwriting are the great fundamentals. At a conference in Chicago I once sat next to a stranger at the bar who railed against educators because a recent job applicant in his frozen food business could not "write," even though he was a college graduate. I agreed that we should have college graduates who can express themselves but then I discovered that the man meant that the fellow typed his copy, that he had poor handwriting. I would like to think of *basic*, however, as embracing more. My basics are concerned with more elemental instincts and needs in man, with principles that shaped man's thinking before he had grammar. Those are man's concerns with his place in the world, and with his desire to understand himself, his environment and the beyond—concerns and desires that predated his artistic expressions of these questions. Emily Genauer has underscored the importance of art in her life:

> A work of art is important to me because it is the only assurance I can find, the only warrant available to me, of a higher order and master plan for the universe. I cannot find it in the succession of injustices which constitute history. I cannot find it in explorations of scientists. Their field of inquiry is too vast. I cannot fit the moon and the atom and the new concept of space into my own small reckonings.
>
> But I can, looking at a work of art, feel order within its strict limitations. It is an order which brings into a form that I can encompass, a harmony, a balance, a rhythm that seem to be a projection, in tiny but still-moving scale, of the forces which govern nature (where we can observe them) and which must also govern eternity (where we cannot).
>
> Is all this to deny art its independent worth, to see it always as a means to an end, never as an end in itself? Yes, if the end is a quickened sense of life, a heightened awareness of relationships, a new appreciation of the importance of the individual, and a fresh revelation of Unity, Ultimate Truth, or whatever you care to substitute for the word we all find so hard to use, God.

I firmly believe that all people share Genauer's desire to comprehend the incomprehensible, to find "a higher order and master plan for the universe." For many faith in God *is* sufficient; but for others the nagging questions must be answered some other way. Art is one way of answering.

I do not intend to deny the importance of teaching my specific subject—language. In all that I do, I share the goals of English teachers generally. My students need to gain greater mastery of language; they need to be taught to read, write, speak, listen and think. I even believe that they must be taught to feel. As I attempt to make them more aware of their language—to build vocabularies, to improve sentence structures, etc.—I find it most useful to get a bit of help from those "friends in allied disciplines." Today I think it is easier for a student to learn to appreciate verbal imagery better through looking at visual imagery in painting or to gain a better ear for language through listening to music first.

Although it may seem absurd to some people outside the profession, most teachers probably agree that we have to teach *sensitivity*. From the child's infancy on, we work at instilling discipline in a child, in helping him focus his

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senses to become aware of the world around him. One of my students who had taken a summer course in psychology supplied the name "polymorphous pervert" for an infant. It is an apt label. That mass of uncoordinated flesh and senses has little perception of relationships and values. He feels that he is the world itself and must learn to distinguish boundaries, limits, possibilities. No doubt John Crowe Ransom had this feeling of the child in mind in "Janet Waking" when he said Janet ran "across the world on the grass" to find poor Chuckie.

But even in high school there is a polymorphous quality to students. Years ago in a little review in London one sketch was a mock tribute to a pair of theater writers who had had a string of flops in the West End. The sketch, titled "A Resounding Tinkle," included an interview with the writers. Asked how she first began to write, Dotty replied, "With block letters." We all recognize that we still teach children to write the same way. Generation after generation must go through the same process of differentiating *C* from *G*, *E* from *F*. It all started when good old Mr. Antrobus discovered the difference between *n* and *m*. The point is that kids in high school today, though they may be glib and superficially sophisticated, still need training in looking, listening, evaluating, and expressing and in developing *real* sensitivity to the nuances of language.

Aristotle was really an early humanities teacher. Although his *Poetics* concentrates mainly on tragic drama, he begins by telling us that most arts are related in their being "modes of imitation" which imitate "action," a "movement of spirit." The arts further relate in that they bring us pleasure when we recognize the action imitated and that they please us in their rhythmic and other artistic qualities which we consider orderly and beautiful. Can one be much more basic than invoking Aristotle as a justification for a humanities approach to the teaching of English?

Earlier I noted that my basics are concerned with man's spirit itself. Naturally, to have access to the expression of that spirit as it is captured in art, the student needs tools and an awareness of the processes at work in the piece under investigation.

If he learns that the senses work in combination to give us awareness, he can consciously call on more than one sensory perception in his own analytical appreciation of literary experience. For example, in class at the opening of a course I frequently discuss with a class the idea of sensory reciprocity. Having touched many different surfaces, one need only look at other surfaces to know how they feel: the cold, hard surface of metal; the warm, soft nubbiness of a woolen sweater; the contrasting textures of male or female flesh; the difference in the feel of a rough bearded face and a smooth baby's belly (or bottom). In Cleveland the museum frequently has tours for blind people, who are allowed to experience the paintings by touching them. Certainly we respond to visual stimulation quite often as if we were feeling it, as is evident in the response of some people to erotic scenes in contemporary films.

Similarly, visual images may creat sound impressions. Charles Burchfield's work offers numerous examples of the process. His *Bird Singing in the Rain* and *Crickets in the Grass* vibrate with messages of the living organisms that inspired him. At the Museum of Modern Art Joan Miro's *Song of the Vowels* sings out "a," "e," "i," "o," "u" in various pitches and durations, all presented in bright circles and oblongs of color against a black background, which in itself suggests the silence that surrounds sound. Jackson Pollock's *Sounds in the Grass* is a much less literal presentation of Burchfield's crickets, but its very contemporary idiom may make it more effective for a contemporary audience. Finally, Matta's *Listen to Living* is a marvelous, rich reminder of the mysterious essences of life—the flux, the nebulousness, the imponderability. Its fluid translucence seems to shift and shape and then reshape itself before our eyes. It is gaseous, liquid and solid, a world of insights from math and science presented in the medium of painting. And it has its beautiful counterpart in literature.

To illustrate one of the ways in which the visual experience helps the student understand literature, let me examine e.e. cummings' "Jimmie's got a goil."

Jimmie's got a goil
goil
goil,
Jimmie
's got a goil and
she coitnly can shimmie

when you see her shake
shake
shake,
when
you see her shake a
shimmie how you wish that you was Jimmie.

Oh for such a gurl
gurl
gurl,
oh
for such a gurl to
be a fellow's twistandtwirl
talk about your Sal—
Sal—
Sal—,
talk
about your Salo
-mes but gimmie Jimmie's gal.

I usually ask the class what kind of girl Jimmie's girl is, what the attitude of the speaker or speakers is, what basically characterizes her. I'm told that she is lively, energetic, sexy (sometimes a little snob will suggest that she is slutish—however...). The speaker is appreciative, excited,

lustful, etc. Questions about the socio-economic status of the people involved in the poem bring answers that they are lower-middle-class, laboring people, street gangs, the evidence being the accents and the grammar of "that you was Jimmie." We are still, however, left with the question of Jimmie's girl's primary quality, that essence which inspires the boys. If the class has seen Reginald Marsh's *High Yeller*, the task is easier. They see that in painting his portrait of Jimmie's girl, cummings has done what Marsh did to animate *High Yeller*. Those of you who know the painting will recall a striding, long-limbed, smiling black beauty set against a pattern of brownstone steps. Her swirling dress and swinging legs cut diagonals across the lower portion of the painting. But it is the steps themselves that suggest rhythmic vibrations. The step-like placement of "goil, goil, goil;" "shake, shake, shake;" "gurl, gurl, gurl;" and "Sal-, Sal-, Sal-" in the poem is an early form of our contemporary concrete poetry. (And in my estimation, a more successful one. It recalls Shelley's attempts at presenting images of bird flight in his short flapping lines and longer gliding lines.) That word placement makes the bounce, bounce, bounce of the girl's hips. "Twistandtwirl" lets us see the smooth, unbroken pirouette, no doubt with skirt standing wide. The various accents in which *girl* is pronounced suggest the wide-spread appeal of this girl; she is appreciated in the Bronx, in Brooklyn and probably in midtown Manhattan. Without a single word of physical description to let us know if she is young or old, black or white, tall or short, blonde or brunette, cummings manages to let us meet and picture a girl who is alive, alive, alive. It is, no doubt, what Aristotle meant by an imitation of an action. The poem is a celebration of vitality.

A poem that I get out frequently at World Series time is William Carlos Williams' "The Crowd at the Ball Game."

The crowd at the ball game
is moved uniformly
by a spirit of uselessness
which delights them—
all the exciting detail
of the chase
and the escape, the error
the flash of genius—
all to no end save beauty
the eternal—
So in detail they, the crowd,
are beautiful
for this
to be warned against
saluted and defied—
It is alive, venomous
it smiles grimly
its words cut—
The flashy female with her
mother, gets it—
The Jew gets it straight—it
is deadly, terrifying—
It is the Inquisition, the
Revolution
It is beauty itself
that lives
day by day in them
idly—
This is
the power of their faces
It is summer, it is the solstice
the crowd is
cheering, the crowd is laughing
in detail
permanently, seriously
without thought

At first students are very puzzled by it. But then I remind them of a piece of music I have generally played for them by that time—"Tomorrow Belongs to Me" from *Cabaret*. We recall the sweet innocence that the song first seems to have as a young blond tenor sings it; but as others join and the scene widens, we become aware of a dark undertone. The piece modulates to become a Nazi theme, a threat. Back in the poem we note a similar shifting of tone, a change of key. The poet has been fair by giving us *uniformly* in the opening stanza. But we're still deceived somewhat into picturing an innocent crowd, even when we encounter "the chase, the escape. . .the flash of genius." But with the song in mind students quickly volunteer that within the crowd is a mob; that the spirit that animates them to shout and cheer at a ball game is allied to the spirit of Inquisitions and Revolutions. Flashy blondes and Jews are easy victims of crowd-mob hostility as it confirms its "uselessness." As the poem winds down, like a piece of music coming tranquilly to a resolution, we return to a major key. But we have learned something about language and about human nature.

Frequently I play the street songs from *Porgy and Bess*, *Lost in the Stars (Cry, the Beloved Country)* one after another. The students quickly describe two very different women, who have been "described" by the vocal quality, the rhythms and the melodies. One is rotund, matronly; the other slick and sexy. What they are peddling is also very different. That contrast in types of women is useful for me when I want students to see what Joyce intends us to think as he describes the thin-lipped Irish wife and the exotic Jewish woman in *Dubliners*.

A poem like "Bredon Hill" also gains increased meaning if we are aware of the effect of music. Having heard some bright happy music and some dark gloomy music, the students are ready to *hear* the poem:

In Summertime on Bredon
The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
In steeples far and near,
A happy noise to hear.

Here of a Sunday morning
My love and I would lie,
And see the colored counties,
And hear the larks so high
About us in the sky.

The bells would ring to call her
In valleys miles away:
"Come to church, good people;
Good people, come and pray."
But here my love would stay.

And I would turn and answer
Among the springing thyme,
"Oh, peal upon our wedding,
And we will hear the chime,
And come to church in time."

But when the snows at Christmas
On Bredon top were strown,
My love rose up so early
And stole out unbeknown
And went to church alone.

They tolled one bell only,
Groom there was none to see,
The mourners followed after,
And so to church went she,
And would not wait for me.

The bells they sound on Bredon,
And still the steeples hum.
"Come all the church, good people,"—
Oh, noisy bells, be dumb;
I hear you, I will come.

Without musical references, they can sketch in the plot and some of Housman's meaning. But if I recall for them Pope's admonition that the sound should be an echo of the sense and ask them if this poem conforms to that standard, they see and hear more clearly the *e* and *i* sounds which predominate in the spring when the lovers were happy and the *o* and *u* sounds that echo winter and death. They hear the rhythm as an imitation of ringing bells.They also see structure better and see the fourth stanza as a pivot in a classically symmetrical poem. That awareness gives me a good opportunity to introduce students to Babette Deutsch's definition of onomatopoeia which extends that device significantly:

> Onomatopoeia also refers to sound symbolism which does not approximate a precise echo but is strongly suggestive of the thing presented. Linguists bear out the feeling of the unlearned that high tones suggest light and low tones suggest darkness. Jesperson illustrates this with Zangwill's phrase, "The gloom of night, relieved only by the gleam from the street-lamp." Perhaps for reasons connected with the physical act of pronounciation, the short "i" is commonly associated with what is little, the broad "a" with what is large.

In conjunction with this definition, we discuss the difference between *gloom* and *gleam*, the physical act of pronounciation, the placement of the vowels in the mouth, the correspondence to high and low registers on a piano keyboard. Eventually, I find students trying in their own writing to use synonyms which are more successful in "sounding" like the idea they are trying to express. It is a device that helps me establish the principle that synonyms are not synonymous, that the connotations of words vastly alter words which supposedly have the same denotation.

Poetry is also a useful way of teaching good essay structure while alerting the student to his own emotions or to the world around him. For example, in "God's Grandeur," Hopkins states his thesis in the opening line and then develops it with specific examples and details as he proceeds. It's possible to outline the poem for you but I would rather you read it.

God's Grandeur

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

The poem takes on special meaning if the class has seen some of Van Gogh's work, perhaps *Starry Night*. The energy that inhabits matter is more than just a dull physical fact; it is alive and brilliant, as it is in the poem. It is a poem of hope, for despite all that man does to destroy his world, something in "the root" is safe and begins again, as Loren Eiseley tells us in *Firmament of Time*.

Rhythm in poetry is another working element that I find Hopkins helpful in teaching. Which of us has not in his life felt despair, felt life jerking along miserably. Beneath that sea of denim which covers modern youth, there are spirits which share the agony that Hopkins poured into "Carrion Comfort."

Carrion Comfort

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist—slack they may be—these last strands of man
In me or, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.

But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee?

Why? That my chaff might fly, my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, cheer.
Cheer whom though? the hero whose heaven handling flung me, foot trod
Me? or me that fought him? O which one? Is it each one? That night, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.

Those opening lines move with a stubbornness, a resistance which is the very essence of the idea. The repetition of the *not's* is more than a device; we stop at each, heels dug firmly into the ground, pulled by the "knotty" line. The simplicity of "I can" is most eloquent. It is a declaration of faith that is developed in the lines that follow. The alliteration of "darksome devouring eyes" and "bruised bones" makes us feel the dark and the beating the speaker presents. This poem is more than an academic exercise for bright students; it is a statement of principle by which they may gain strength in some future agony.

Confirmation of my feeling that a study of the humanities in all their forms is basic appeared in Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976):

> If we hope to live not just from moment to moment, but in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives. It is well known how many have lost the will to live, and have stopped trying, because such meaning has evaded them. An understanding of the meaning of one's life is not suddenly acquired at a particular age, not even when one has reached chronological maturity. On the contrary, gaining a secure understanding of what the meaning of one's life may or ought to be—this is what constitutes having attained psychological maturity. And this achievement is the end result of a long development....
>
> ...Regarding this task (the child's finding meaning in his life), nothing is more important than the impact of parents and others who take care of the child; second in importance is our cultural heritage, when transmitted to the child in the right manner. When children are young, it is literature that carries such information best.
>
> Given this fact, I became deeply dissatisfied with much of the literature intended to develop the child's mind and personality, because it fails to stimulate and nurture those resources he needs most in order to cope with his difficult inner problems....
>
> For a story truly to hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity. But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination; *help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions; be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations; give full recognition to his difficulties,...at the same time suggest solutions to the problems which perturb him....while simultaneously promoting confidence in himself and his future* (pp. 3-5) (Emphasis added.)

Although the book concentrates on the necessity of folk fairy tales in early childhood as a basis for later adjustments, I am convinced of the applicability of the statements to the experiences of children of all ages. We teach children how to read and write in order to enable them to approach the thoughts of others independently and to articulate their own experiences. The specific pieces of literature and other art may vary widely; most individual works will be forgotten as are the *facts* of history and many other subjects. The process and principles will remain.

Aristotle observed that recognizing the truth of some artist's endeavors brings pleasure. As we recognize a spirit that is familiar, perhaps even our own, we respond, "Ah, that is he." The response was worded differently in *The Connection*, an experimental work by The Living Theater a few years ago. The play concerned a group of drug addicts waiting for their "connection." It had no beginning and no *real* intermission; as the audience entered, the stage was set, some actors seated down front were talking, and the play seemed to be an eavesdropping into their real lives. At intermission actors moved among the audience asking for money for a fix. As tension mounted in the play, as nerves became more taut, an actor seated in the audience called out, "That's the way it is, man, that's the way it really is." As teachers, we should try to introduce the students to themselves and to other people through vital experiences which will make them respond, "That's the way it really is." Many a successful sailor, salesman, senator, or school teacher wonders why he feels as he does, why his family is as it is, or why people generally behave as they do. Whether life is richly rewarding or basically unsatisfying, art offers us clues to the reasons. Since we live our lives twenty-four hours a day from birth to death and since we parse sentences only a few hours a week for a few years of our lives, I maintain that the study of our human elements is truly basic.■